

N. La Flachine A.S. de)
The last Check to Antinomianism.

A

POLEMICAL ESSAY
ON THE
TWIN DOCTRINES
OF
CHRISTIAN IMPERFECTION
AND A
DEATH PURGATORY.

By JOHN FLETCHER, VICAR of Madeley.

THE THIRD EDITION.

Be ye perfect.—Every one that is perfect, shall be as his Master,
If thou wilt be perfect, go, and sell that thou hast, and give
to the poor. JESUS CHRIST.

If any man teach otherwise, and consent not to wholesome words
even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the doctrine
which is according to godliness, he is proud. ST. PAUL.

Let no man deceive you, &c. For this purpose the Son of God was
manifested, that he might destroy the works of the Devil.—
The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin.—In him is
no sin.—Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have
boldness in the day of judgment: because as he [the Vine] is,
so are we [the branches] in this world. ST. JOHN.

L O N D O N:

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P R E F A C E.

Why the following Tract is called, THE LAST CHECK TO ANTINOMIANISM, and A POLEMICAL ESSAY.—Mr. Hill's Creed for Perfectionists.—A short Account of the Manner in which Souls are purged from the Remains of Sin, according to the Doctrine of the Heathens, the Romanists, and the Calvinists.—The PURGATORY recommended by the Church of England, and vindicated in this Book, is Christ's Blood and a soul-purifying Faith.

I CALL the following Essay, *The Last Check to Antinomianism*, because it properly continues and closes the preceding Checks. When a late Fellow of Clare-hall, Cambridge, attacked the doctrine of sincere obedience, which I defend in the Checks, he said, with great truth, “*Sincere obedience, as a condition, will lead you unavoidably up to PERFECT obedience.*” What he urged as an argument against our views of the gospel, is one of the reasons by which we defend them, and perhaps the strongest of all: for our doctrine leads as naturally to holiness and perfect obedience, as that of our opponents does to sin and imperfection. If the streams of Mr. Hill’s doctrine never stop, till they have carried men into a sea of *indwelling sin*, where he leaves them to struggle with waves of immorality, or with billows of corruption all the days of their life; it is evident that our doctrine, which is the very reverse of his, must take us to a sea of *indwelling holiness*, where we calmly outside all the storms, which Satan raised to destroy

Job's perfection ; and where all our pursuing corruptions are as much destroyed as the Egyptians were in the Red-Sea.

Truth, like Moses's rod, is all of a piece : and so is the Serpent, which Truth devours. Look at the tail of the error which we attack ; and you will see the venomous, mortal sting, of *indwelling sin*. Consider the but-end of the rod, with which we defend ourselves against that smooth, yet biting error ; and you will find the pearl of great price, the invaluable diamond of *Christian perfection*. In the very nature of things therefore, our long, controversial warfare, must end in a close engagement for the preservation of the sting ; or for the recovery of the jewel. If our adversaries can save *indwelling sin*, the deadly sting, Antinomianism has won the day : but if we can rescue *Christian perfection*, the precious jewel, then will perfect Christianity again dare to shew herself, without being attacked as a dangerous monster ; or scoffed at as the base offspring of self-ignorance and pharisaic pride. This remark on the *Antinomianism* of our opponents, is founded upon the following arguments.

(1) All those who represent *Christian believers* as *LAWLESS*, first, by denying that *Christ's law* is a rule of judgment, which absolutely requires our own personal obedience; secondly, by representing *this law* as a mere rule of life ; and thirdly, by insinuating that this rule of life is, after all, absolutely impracticable ; that a personal fulfilment of it is not expected from any believer ; that there never was a Christian who lived one day without breaking it ; and that believers shall be eternally saved, merely because Christ kept it for them : —all those, I say, who hold this Solifidian doctrine concerning *Christ's law*, are *Christian Antinomians* with a witness ; that is, they are *lawless Christians* in

in principle, if not in practice. Now all those who attack the doctrine of constant obedience, and Christian perfection which we maintain, are under this three-fold error concerning *Christ's law*; and therefore they are all *Antinomians*, that is, *Christians, lawless* in principle, though many of them, we are persuaded are not so in practice; the fear of God causing in them a happy inconsistency, between their *legal* conduct, and their *lawless* tenets.

(2) If those who plead for the breaking of *Christ's law*, by the necessary *indwelling* of a revengeful thought *only* for one week, or for one day, are bare-faced *Antinomians*; what shall we say of the men, who, on various pretences, plead for the necessary *indwelling* of all manner of corruption, during the term of life? Can it be said, with any propriety, that these men are free from the plague of *Antinomianism*?

(3) And lastly, when the reader comes to Section XVI, wherein I produce and answer the arguments, by which the ministers of the *imperfect gospel* defend the continuance of *indwelling sin* in all believers till death, he will find that their strongest reasons for their continuance, are the very same, which the most lawless apostates, and the most daring renegadoes daily produce, when they plead for their continuing in drunkenness, lying, fornication, and adultery: and if these immoral gospellers deserve the name of *GROSS Antinomians*: why should not the moral men, who hold their loose principles, and publicly recommend them as "*doctrines of grace*," deserve the name of *REFINED Antinomians*? May not a silk-weaver, who softly works a piece of taffeta, be as justly called a *weaver*, as the man who weaves the coarsest sack-cloth.

Through the force of these observations, after weighing my subject in the balances of meditation and prayer for some months, I am come to these alarming conclusions: (1) There is no medium between pleading for the continuance of indwelling sin, and pleading for the continuance of Heart Antinomianism. And (2) all who attack the doctrine of an *evangelically sinless* perfection, deserve, *when they do it* (which I would hope is not often) the name of *advocates for sin*, better than the name of *Gospel-ministers* and *Preachers of righteousness*. I am conscious that this two-fold conclusion wounds in the tenderest part, several of my dear, mistaken brethren in the ministry, whom, on various accounts, I highly honour in the Lord. Nevertheless I am obliged in conscience to publish it, lest any of my readers, or any of those whom they may warn, should be misled into Antinomianism, through the mistakes of those popular preachers: for the interests of truth, the honour of Christ's holy religion, and the welfare of precious souls, are, and ought to be to me, and to every Christian, far dearer than the credit of some, good, injudicious men, who inadvertently undermine the cause of godliness; thinking to do God service, by stretching forth a *solifidian* hand, to uphold the ark of gospel-truth. Thus much for the reasons which have engaged me to call this Essay, *The last Check to Antinomianism.*

If the reader desires to know, why I call it also *A Polemical Essay*, he is informed that *Richard Hill, Esq;* (at the end of a pamphlet entitled, *Three Letters written to the Rev. J. Fletcher, Vicar of Madeley,*) has published "A Creed for Arminians and Perfectionists." The ten first articles of this Creed, which respect the Arminians, I have already answered in *The fictitious and genuine Creed*; and the following sheets contain my reply to the last article, which entirely refers to the Perfectionists.

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That gentleman introduces the whole of his fictitious Creed by these lines: “*The following confession of faith, however shocking, not to say blasphemous, it may appear to the humble Christian, must inevitably be adopted, if not in express words, yet in substance by every Arminian and Perfectionist whatsoever; though the last article of it chiefly concerns such as are ordained Ministers in the Church of England.*” — This last article, which is the Creed I answer here, runs thus:

“ Though I have solemnly subscribed to the Thirty-nine Articles of the Church of England, and have affirmed that I believe them from my heart, yet I think our Reformers were profoundly ignorant of true Christianity, when they declared in the ninth article, that ‘*the infection of nature does remain in them which are regenerate;*’ and in the fifteenth, that, *ALL WE, the rest (Christ only excepted) although baptized and born again in Christ, yet offend in many things, and if we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.*’ This I totally deny, because it cuts up root and branch my favourite doctrine of *Perfection;* and therefore let Peter, Paul, James, and John, say what they will, and let the Reformers and Martyrs join their Syren-song, their eyes were at best but half opened (for want of a little *Foundry eye-salve;*) therefore I cannot look upon them as adult believers in Jesus Christ.

J. F.
J. W.
W. S.”

These initial letters probably stand for *John Fletcher, John Wesley, and Walter Sellon.* As Mr. Hill seems to level his witty creed at me first, I shall first make my observations upon it. The *van* without the *main body*, and the *rear*, may perhaps make a proper stand against that gentleman’s mistake;

take:—A dangerous mistake this, which is inseparably connected with the doctrine of a *purgatory* little better than that of the Papists; it being evident, that, if we cannot be purged from the remains of sin in this life, we must be purged from them in death, or after death; or we must be banished from God's presence: for Reason and Scripture jointly depose, that *nothing unholy or unclean shall enter into the heavenly Jerusalem.*

If we understand by *Purgatory* the manner in which souls still polluted with the remains of sin, are, or may be *purged* from these remains, that they may see a holy God, and dwell with him forever; the question, *Which is the true Purgatory?* is by no means frivolous: for it is the grand Enquiry, *How shall I be eternally saved?* proposed in different expressions.

There are four opinions concerning *Purgatory*, or the *purgation* of souls from the remains of sin. The wildest is that of the heathens, who supposed, “That the souls which depart this life with some moral filth cleaving to them, are purified by being hanged out to sharp, cutting winds; by being plunged into a deep, impetuous whirlpool; or by being thrown into a refining fire in some Tartarean region;” witness these lines of *Virgil*:

Aliæ panduntur inanes
Suspensæ ad ventos: aliis sub gurgite vasto.
Infectum cluitur scelus, aut exuritur igni.

The second opinion is that of the *Romanists*, who teach, that such souls are completely sanctified by the virtue of Christ's blood, and the sharp operation of a penal temporary fire in the suburbs of hell. The third opinion is that of the *Calvinists*, who think, that the stroke of death must absolutely be joined with Christ's blood and spirit, and with our faith, to cleanse the thoughts of our hearts, and to kill the inbred man of sin.

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The last sentiment is that of the Church of England, which teaches that there is no other Purgatory but "Christ's blood"—"Stedfast, perfect faith"—and "The inspiration of God's holy Spirit, cleansing the thoughts of our hearts, that we may perfectly love him, and worthily magnify his holy name."—"The only PURGATORY wherein we must trust to be saved [says she] is the death and blood of Christ, which, if we apprehend with a TRUE AND STEDFAST FAITH" [called soon after 'a PERFECT faith'] it purgeth and cleanseth us from ALL our sins. *The blood of Christ, says St. John, hath cleansed us from all sin. The blood of Christ, says St. Paul, hath purged our consciences from dead works to serve the living God, &c.* This then is the PURGATORY wherein all Christian men put their trust and confidence."

Homily on Prayer, Part iii.

Nor is this doctrine of *Purgatory* peculiar to the Church of England: for the unprejudiced Puritans themselves maintained it in the last century. Mr. R. Alleine, in his excellent treatise on *Godly Fear*, printed in London, 1674, says, page 161, "The Lord Christ is sometimes resembled to a Refining Fire, &c. He is a refiner's fire,—and he shall fit as a refiner, and purifier of silver. He shall purify, he shall save his people from their sins, yet so as by fire. God has his purgatory as well as his hell; though not according to that popish dream, a Purgatory after this life."—And I beg leave to add;—though not according to that *Calvinian* dream, a Purgatory when we leave this life—a Purgatory in the article of death.

The scriptural doctrine of *Purgatory* is vindicated, and the new-fangled doctrine of a *Death-Purgatory* is exploded, in the following pages: where I endeavour both to defend the glorious liberty of the children of God, and to attack the false liberty of those, who, while they promise liberty to others

thers in Christ, are themselves [doctrinally at least] the servants of corruption ; pleading hard for the indwelling of sin in our hearts so long as we live ; and thinking it almost “*blasphemous*” to assert, that *Christ’s blood*, fully applied by the Spirit, through a steadfast faith, can radically *cleanse us from all sin*, without the least assistance from the arrows or sweats of death.

Reader, I plead for the most precious liberty in the world, *heart liberty* :—for liberty from the most galling of all yokes, the yoke of *heart-corruption* : let not thy prejudices turn a deaf ear to the important plea. If thou candidly, believably, and practically receivest the *truth as it is in Jesus*, it shall make thee free, and thou shalt be FREE INDEED. Then, instead of shouting “*Indwelling sin and Death-purgatory*,” thou wilt fulfil the law of liberty : shouting, Christ and Christian liberty for ever.” In the mean time, when thou makest intercession for thy well-wishers, remember the author of this *Essay*, and pray that he may plead on his knees against the remains of sin, far more earnestly than he does in these sheets against Mr. Hill’s mistakes.

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THE LAST CHECK TO ANTINOMIANISM.

SECTION I.

The best Way of opposing the Doctrines of Christian Imperfection and of a Death-Purgatory, is to place the Doctrine of Christian Perfection in a proper Light.—Christian Perfection is the Maturity of a Believer's Grace under the Gospel of Christ.—It is absurd to suppose that this Perfection is sinless, if it is measured by our CREATOR's Law of paradisiacal Innocence and Obedience.—Established Believers fulfil our REDEEMER's evangelical Law of Liberty. Whilst they fulfil it, they do not transgress it, that is, (EVANGELICALLY speaking) they DO NOT SIN.

MOST of the controversies which arise between men who fear God, spring from the hurry with which some of them find fault with what they have not examined, and speak evil of what they do not understand. Why does Mr. Hill at the head of the Calvinists attack the doctrine of *Christian perfection* which we contend for? Is it because he and they are sworn enemies to righteousness, and zealous protectors of iniquity? Not at all,

all. The grand reason, next to their Calvinian prejudices, is their inattention to the question, and to the arguments by which our sentiments are supported. Notwithstanding the manner in which that gentleman has treated me and my friends in his controversial heats, I still entertain so good an opinion of him as to think, that, if he understood our doctrine, he would no more pour contempt upon it, than upon the oracles of God. I shall therefore endeavour to rectify his ideas of the glorious Christian-Liberty which we press after. If producing *light* is the best method of opposing *darkness*, setting the doctrine of *Christian perfection* in a proper point of view, will be the best means of opposing the doctrines of *Christian perfection*, and of a *Death-purgatory*. Begin we then by taking a view of our *Jerusalem* and her *perfection*: and when we shall have marked her bulwarks, and cleared the ground between her towers and Mr. *Hill's* battery, we shall march up to it, and see whether his arguments have the solidity of brass, or only the showy appearance of wooden artillery, painted and mounted like brazen ordnance.

Christian perfection! Why should the harmless phrase offend us?—*Perfection!* Why should that lovely word frighten us? Is it not common and plain? Did not *Cicero* speak intelligibly, when he called *accomplished* philosophers, *perfectos philosophos*; and an *excellent* orator, “*perfectum oratorem?*” Did *Ovid* expose his reputation when he said that “*Chiron** *perfected Achilles in music,*” or, “taught him to play upon the lute to *perfection?*” And does Mr. *Hill* think it wrong to observe that a fruit grown to *maturity* is in its *perfection?* We, whom that Gentleman calls *perfectionists*, use the word + *perfection* exactly in the same sense; giving

* *Phillyrides puerum cithara perfecit Achillem.*

+ The word *Perfection* comes from the Latin *perficio*, to *perfet*, to *finis*, to *accomplish*; it exactly answers to the words *τελέων*, and *τελειω*, generally used in the Old and New Testament. Nor can their derivatives be more literally, and exactly

giving that name to the *maturity of grace* peculiar to established believers under their respective dispensations: and if this is an error, we are led into it by the sacred writers, who use the word *perfection* as well as we.

The word *predestinate* occurs but four times in all the scriptures, and the word *predestination* not once; and yet Mr. Hill would justly exclaim against us, if we shewed our wit by calling for “*a little Foundry*” [or *Tabernacle*] “*eye-salve*,” to help us to see the word *predestination* ONCE in all the Bible. Not so the word *perfection*: it occurs, with its derivatives as frequently as most words in the scripture; and not seldom in the very same sense in which we take it. Nevertheless we do not lay an undue stress upon the expression; and if we thought that our concession would answer any good end, we would entirely give up that harmless and significant word. But, if it is expedient to retain the UNSCRIPTURAL word *Trinity*, because it is a kind of watch-word, by which we frequently discover the secret opposers of the mysterious distinction of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost in the divine unity; how much more proper is it not to renounce the SCRIPTURAL word *Perfection*, by which the dispirited spies, who bring an evil report upon the good land of holiness, are often detected?—Add to this, that the following

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rendered than by *perfect* and *perfection*. If our translators render sometimes the word οὐδὲν by *upright* and *sincere*, or by *sincerity* and *integrity*, it is because they know that these expressions, like the original word, admit of a great latitude. Thus Columel calls wood that has no rotten part, and is perfectly sound, *lignum SINCERUM*: and Horace says, that a sweet Cask, which has no bad smell of any sort, is *vas SINCERUM*. Thus also Cicero calls purity of diction, which is perfectly free from faults against grammar, *INTEGRITAS sermonis*: Plautus says, that a pure, undefiled virgin, is *filia INTEGRA*. And our translators call the perfectly-pure milk of God’s word, *The SINCERE milk of the word*: 1 Peter ii. 2. If therefore the words *sincerity* and *Integrity* are taken in their full latitude, they convey the fullest meaning of οὐδὲν, and τελειότης, i. e. *perfection*.

declaration of our Lord does not permit us to renounce either the word or the thing, *Whosoever shall be ashamed of me, and of my words in this sinful generation, of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father.* Now the words of my motto, *Be ye perfect, &c.* being Christ's own words, we dare no more be ashamed of them, than we dare desire that he may be ashamed of us in the great day. Thus much for the word *perfection*.

Again: We call CHRISTIAN *perfection* the maturity of grace and holiness, which established, adult believers attain to under the CHRISTIAN dispensation; and, by this means, we distinguish that maturity of grace, both from the ripeness of grace, which belongs to the dispensation of the Jews BELOW us; and from the ripeness of glory, which belongs to departed saints ABOVE us. Hence it appears, that by *christian perfection* we mean nothing but the cluster and maturity of the graces, which compose the *christian character* in the church militant.

In other words, CHRISTIAN PERFECTION is a spiritual constellation made up of these gracious stars, *perfect repentance, perfect faith, perfect humility, perfect meekness, perfect self-denial, perfect resignation, perfect hope, perfect charity for our visible enemies, as well as for our earthly relations.*—And above all, *perfect love for our invisible God, thro' the explicit knowledge of our Mediator Jesus Christ.* And as this last star is always accompanied by all the others, as Jupiter is by his satellites, we frequently use, as St. John, the phrase *perfect love*, instead of the word *perfection*; understanding by it the pure love of God, shed abroad in the heart of established believers by the Holy Ghost, which is abundantly given them under the fulness of the *christian dispensation*.

Should Mr. Hill ask if the *christian perfection* which we contend for, is a SINLESS perfection, we reply: *Sin is the transgression of a divine law,* and man may be considered either as being under
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the *anti-evangelical, Christless, remediless* law of our CREATOR ; or, as being under the *evangelical, mediatorial, remedying* law of our REDEEMER : and the question must be answered according to the nature of these two laws.

With respect to the *first*, that is, the *Adamic, Christless* law of innocence and paradisiacal perfection, we utterly renounce the doctrine of *SINLESS perfection*, for three reasons: (1) We are conceived and born in a state of sinful degeneracy, whereby *that* law is already virtually broken. (2) Our mental and bodily powers are so enfeebled, that we cannot help actually breaking *that* law in numberless instances, even after our *full* conversion. And (3) when once we have broken *that* law, it considers us as transgressors for ever: nor can it any more pronounce us *sinless*, than the rigorous law which condemns a man to be hanged for murder, can absolve a murderer, let his repentance and faith be ever so *perfect*. Therefore, I repeat it, with respect to the *Christless* law of paradisiacal obedience, we entirely disclaim *sinless* perfection; and improperly speaking, we say with Luther, “ *In every good work the just man SINNETH*.” That is, he more or less transgresses the law of paradisiacal innocence, by not thinking so deeply, not speaking so gracefully, not acting so properly, not obeying so vigorously, as he would do, if he were still endued with original perfection, and paradisiacal powers. Nor do we, *IN THE SAME SENSE*, scruple to say with Bishop Latimer: “ *He [Christ] saved us, not that we should be without sin; that no sin should be left in our hearts: No: he saved us not so.* For ALL MANNER OF IMPERFECTIONS remain in us, yea in the best of us: So that, if God should enter into judgment with us” [*according to the Christless law given to Adam before the fall*] “ *we should be damned. For there neither is nor was any man born into this world, who could say, I am clean from sin*” (*I fulfil the Adamic law of innocence*) “ *except Jesus Christ:*”

And IN THAT SENSE, we have all reason to pray with David, *Cleanse thou me from my secret faults; for if thou wilt mark what is done amiss, Lord, who may abide it?*—If thou wilt judge us according to the law of paradisiacal perfection, what man living shall be justified in thy sight? But Christ has so completely fulfilled our Creator's paradisiacal law of innocence, which allows neither of repentance nor of renewed obedience, that we shall not be judged by that law; but by a law adapted to our present state and circumstances, a milder law, called *the law of Christ*, i. e. the Mediator's law, which is, like himself, full of evangelical grace and truth.

To the many arguments, which I have advanced in the *Checks* in defence of this law, I shall add one more, taken from Heb. vii. 12; *The PRIESTHOOD being CHANGED, there is made OF NECESSITY a CHANGE also of the LAW.* From these words I conclude, that, if the law under which the Jews were, was of necessity changed, when God substituted the priesthood of Christ for that of Aaron; much more was the Adamic law of paradisiacal innocence of necessity changed, when God gave to Adam by promise the *Bruiser of the serpent's head*, the *High-priest after the order of Melchisedec.* For if a CHANGE in the external priesthood OF NECESSITY implied a change of the *Mosaic law*; how much more did the INSTITUTION of the priesthood itself, necessarily imply a change of the *Adamic law*, which was given without any mediating priest!

If Mr. Hill therefore, will do our doctrine justice, we intreat him to consider, that we are not without law to God, nor yet under a christless law with Adam; but under a law to Christ, that is under the law of our royal priest, the evangelical law of liberty:—a more gracious law this, which allows of sincere repentance, and is fulfilled by loving faith. Now as we shall be judged by this law of liberty, we maintain not only that it may, but also that it MUST be kept; and that it is actually kept by established christians, according to the last and fullest edition of it, which

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is that of the New Testament. Nor do we think it “shocking” to hear an adult believer say: *The law of the spirit of life IN CHRIST JESUS has made me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law [of innocence, or the letter of the Mosaic law] could not do, in that it was weak thro’ the flesh, God sending his own Son condemned sin in the flesh, that the righteousness of the law might be [evangelically] FULFILLED IN US WHO WALK NOT AFTER THE FLESH BUT AFTER THE SPIRIT, Rom. viii. 2, &c.*

Reason and scripture seem to us to confirm this doctrine: For we think it is far less absurd to say, that the king and parliament make laws, which no Englishman can possibly keep; than to suppose, that Christ and his Apostles have given us precepts, which no christian is able to observe: And St. James assures us, the evangelical *law of Christ and liberty* is that by which we shall stand or fall in judgment: *So speak ye, and so do, says he, as they that shall be judged by the law of liberty, Jam. ii. 12.* We find the christian edition of that law in all the New Testament, but especially in our Lord’s sermon on the mount, and in St. Paul’s description of charity.—We are persuaded with St. John and St. Paul, that, as *sin is the transgression*, so penitential, pure *love is the fulfilling of that evangelical law*: And therefore, we do not scruple to say with the Apostle, that *he who loveth another hath fulfilled it*;—and that *there is no occasion of stumbling*, i. e. no sin, in him; fulfilling the law of Christ and sinning [in the evangelical sense of the word] being as diametrically opposite to each other, as obeying and disobeying—working righteousness and working iniquity.

We do not doubt but, as a reasonable, loving father never requires of a child, who is only ten years old, the work of one who is thirty years of age: so our heavenly Father never expects of us, in our debilitated state, the obedience of immortal Adam in paradise, or the uninterrupted worship of

sleepless angels in heaven. We are persuaded therefore, that, for Christ's sake, he is pleased with an humble obedience to our present light, and a loving exertion of our present powers; accepting our gospel-services according to what we have, and not according to what we have not. Nor dare we call that loving exertion of our present powers, *sin*, lest by so doing we should contradict the Scriptures, confound *sin* and *obedience*, and remove all the landmarks which divide the devil's common from the Lord's vineyard. And if at any time we have exaggerated the difficulty of keeping Christ's law, we acknowledge our error, and confess that, by this means, we have calvinistically traduced the equity of our gracious God, and inadvertently encouraged antinomian delusions.

To conclude: We believe, that, although adult, established believers, or perfect christians, may admit of many involuntary mistakes, errors, and faults; and of many involuntary improprieties of speech and behaviour; yet, so long as their *will* is bent upon doing God's will;—so long as they walk not after the flesh, but after the spirit;—so long as they fulfil the law of liberty by pure love, they do not sin according to the gospel: because (evangelically speaking) *sin is the transgression, and love is the fulfilling of that law*. Far then from thinking, that there is the least absurdity in saying daily, *Vouchsafe to keep me this day without sin*, we doubt not but in the believers, who walk in the light as Christ is in the light, that deep petition is answered, the righteousness of the law, which they are under, is fulfilled; and of consequence, an evangelically *sinless* perfection is daily experienced.—I say evangelically *sinless*, because, without the word evangelically, the phrase *sinless perfection* gives an occasion of cavilling to those who seek it, as Mr. Wesley intimates in the following quotation, which is taken from his *Plain account of christian perfection*, page 60. “To explain myself a little farther on this head: (1) Not only *sin*, properly so called, that is,

“ voluntary

" voluntary transgression of a known law, but *sin*,
" improperly so called, that is, an *involuntary*
" transgression of a divine law, known or unknown,
" needs the atoning blood.—(2) I believe there is
" no such perfection in this life, as excludes these
" *involuntary* transgressions, which I apprehend to
" be naturally consequent on the ignorance and
" mistakes inseparable from mortality.—(3) There-
" fore *sinless perfection* is a phrase I never use, lest
" I should seem to contradict myself.—(4) I be-
" lieve a person filled with the love of God is still
" liable to these *involuntary* transgressions.—(5)
" Such transgressions you may call *sins*, if you
" please; I do not, for the reasons above-men-
" tioned."

S E C T I O N II.

Pious Calvinists have had AT TIMES, nearly the same views of christian perfection which we have. They dissent from us chiefly because they confound the anti-evangelical law of innocence, and the evangelical law of liberty, peccability and sin, Adamic and Christian perfection; and because they do not consider, that christian perfection falling infinitely short of God's ABSOLUTE perfection, admits of a daily GROWTH; that angels have their "short comings" in heaven; and that Christ had his innocent infirmities upon earth.

IF it were necessary, we could support the doctrine of christian perfection stated in the preceding pages by almost numberless quotations from the most judicious and pious Calvinists. The sentiments of two or three of them may edify the reader, and give him a specimen of the candor, with which they have written upon the subject, when a spring tide of evangelical truth raised them above the shallows of their system.

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" If love be sincere, [says pious Mr. Henry] it is accepted as the fulfilling of the law. Surely we serve a good Master, that has summed up all our duty in one word, and that a short word, and a sweet word, *Love*, the beauty and harmony of the universe. Loving and being loved is all the pleasure, joy, and happiness of an intelligent being. God is love, and love is his image upon the soul. Where it is, the soul is well moulded, and the heart fitted for every good work." *Henry's Exposition on Rom. xiii. 10.*—Again: " It is well for us that by virtue of the covenant of grace, upon the score of Christ's righteousness, sincerity is accepted as our gospel perfection." *Hen. on Gen. vi. 9.*—[See the note on the word *perfection*, Sect. I.]

Pious Bishop Hopkins is exactly of the same mind. " Consider, says he, " for your encouragement, that it is not so much the absolute and legal perfection of the work, as the [evangelical] perfection of the worker, that is, the perfection of the heart, which is looked at and rewarded by God. There is a two-fold perfection, the perfection of the work, and that of the workman. The perfection of the work is, when the work does so exactly and strictly answer the holy law of God, that there is no irregularity in it. The perfection of the workman is nothing but inward sincerity and uprightness of the heart towards God, which may be where there are many imperfections and defects intermingled. If God accepted and rewarded no work, but what is absolutely perfect in respect of the law; this would take off the wheels of all endeavours, for our obedience falls far short of legal perfection in this life;" (*the Adamic law making no allowance for the weakness of fallen man.*) " But we do not stand upon such terms as these are with our God. It is not so much what our works are, as what our heart is, that God looks at and will reward. Yet know also that if our hearts are perfect and sincere, we shall endeavour to the utmost

most of our power, that our works may be perfect according to the strictness of the law."

Archbishop Leighton pleads also for the perfection we maintain, and by calvinistically supposing that *perseverance* is necessary to christian perfection, he extols it above Adam's paradisiacal perfection. Take his own words abridged: "By *obedience* sanctification is here intimated: It signifies both habitual and actual *obedience*, renovation of the heart, and conformity to the divine will: The mind is illuminated by the Holy Ghost to know and *believe* the divine will; yea this *faith* is the great and chief part of this *obedience*, Rom. i. 8. The truth of the doctrine is first impressed on the mind, hence flows out pleasant *obedience* and full" [he does not say of sin, but] "of love: Hence all the affections, and the whole body with its members, learn to give a willing *obedience* and submit to God; whereas before they resisted him, being under the standard of Satan. This *obedience*, tho' imperfect" [when it is measured by the christless law of paradisiacal innocence] "yet has a certain, if I may so say, imperfect perfection." [It is not legally but evangelically perfect.] "It is universal" [or perfect]. "three manner of ways, (1) In the subject:—It is not in the tongue alone, or in the hand, &c. but has its root in the heart—(2) In the object:—It embraces the whole law, &c. It accounts no command little, which is from God, because he is great and highly esteemed: no command hard, though contrary to the flesh, because all things are easy to Love; there is the same authority in all, as St. James divinely argues. And this authority is the golden chain to all the commandments" [of the law of liberty preached by St. James] "which if broke in any link falls to pieces.—(3) In the duration, the whole man is subjected to the whole law, and that constantly.—That this threefold perfection of *obedience* is not a picture drawn by fancy, is evident in David,

Psalm

Psalm 119." *Archbishop Leighton's com. on St. Peter.*
Page 15.

That learned prelate, as a pious man could not but be a perfectionist; though, as a Calvinist, he frequently spoke the language of the imperfectionists. Take one more quotation, where he grants all that we contend for. "To be subject to him, (God) 'is truer happiness than to command the whole world. Pure love reckons thus. Though no farther reward were to follow, obedience to God (the perfection of his creature, and its very happiness) carries its full recompence in its own bosom. Yea love delights most in the hardest services: &c. It is love to him indeed to love the labour of love, and the service of it; and that not so much because it leads to rest, and ends in it, but because it is service to him whom we love: yea, that labour is in itself a rest: it is so natural and sweet to a soul that loves, as the revolution of the heavens, which is a motion in rest, and rest in motion; changes not place, though running still: for the motion of love is truly heavenly, and circular still in God; beginning in him, and ending in him; and so not ending, but moving still without weariness, &c. According as the love is, so is the soul: it is made like to, yea, it is made one with that, which it loves, &c. By the love of God it is made divine, is one with him, &c. Now though fallen from this, we are again invited to it; though degenerated and accursed in our sinful nature, yet we are renewed in Christ, and this commandment is renewed in him, and a new way of fulfilling it" [even the way of faith in our Redeemer] "is pointed out." *Select works of Arch. Leighton*, page 461. Where has Mr. Wesley ever exceeded this high description of christian perfection?

I grant that this pious prelate frequently confounds our celestial perfection of glory with our progressive perfection of grace, and on that account supposes that the latter is not attainable in this life: but even then he exhorts us to quit ourselves

selves like sincere perfectionists. " Though men, says he, fall short of their aim, yet it is good to aim high : they shall shoot so much the higher, though not full so high as they aim. Thus we ought to be setting the state of perfection in our eye, resolving not + to rest content below that, and to come as near it as we can, even before we come at it. Phil. iii. 11, 12. This is to act as one that has such a hope, such a state in view, and is still advancing towards it." Ibid. page 184. The mistake of the Archbishop will be particularly pointed out, where I shall show the true meaning of Phil. iii. 11—the passage, behind which he skreens the remains of his Calvinian prejudices.

By the preceding quotations, and by two more from the Rev. Mess. Whitefield and Romaine, which the reader will find at the end of Sect. IX. it appears, that pious Calvinists come *at times* very near the doctrine of christian perfection ; and if they do not constantly enforce it, it is [we apprehend] chiefly for the following reasons.

(1) They generally confound the *christless law of innocence* with the *evangelical law of Christ* ; and, because the former cannot be fulfilled by believers, they conclude that pure obedience to the latter is impracticable.

(2) They confound *peccability* with *sin* ;—the power of sinning with the actual use of that power.

+ I think I have said in one of the Checks, that Arch. Leigh-ton doubted whether those, who do not sincerely aspire after perfection, have saving grace : That doubt (if I now remember right) is Mr. Alleyne's : Though this quotation from the Archbishop shows, that he was not far from Alleyne's sentiment, if he was not in it Pious Dr. Doddridge is explicit on this head. " To allow yourself," says he, " deliberately to sit down satisfied with any imperf. &t attainments in religion, and to look upon a more confirmed and improved state of it as what you do not desire, nay, as what you secretly resolve that you will not pursue, is one of the most fatal signs we can well imagine, that you are an entire stranger to the first principles of it." *Doddridge's Rise and Prog.* Chap. xx.

And

And so long as they suppose, that a bare natural capacity to sin is either original sin, or an evil propensity, we do not wonder at their believing, that original sin, or evil propensities must remain in our hearts till death removes us from this tempting world. But on what argument do they found this notion? Did not God create angels and man *pec-
cable?* Or, in other terms, Did he not endue them with a power to sin or not to sin, to disobey or obey, as they pleased? Did not the event show that they had this tremendous power? But would it not be “blasphemous” to assert, that God created them full of original sin, and of evil propensities?—If an adult believer yields to temptation, and falls into sin as our first parents did; is it a proof that he never was cleansed from inbred sin? If sinning necessarily demonstrates that the heart was always teeming with depravity, will it not follow, that *Adam* and *Eve* were tainted with sin before their will began to decline from original righteousness? Is it not however indubitable, from the nature of God, from scripture, and from sad experience, that after having been created in God’s *sinless* image, and holy likeness, our first parents, as well as some angels, were *drawn away of their own self-conceived lust*, and became evil by the power of their own free-agency? Is it reasonable to think, that the most holy christians, so long as the day of their visitation and probation lasts in this tempting wilderness, are in that respect above *Adam* in paradise, and above angels in heaven? And may we not conclude, that as *Satan* and *Adam* insensibly fell into sin, the one from the height of his celestial perfection, and the other from the summit of his paradisiacal excellence, without any previous bias inclining him to corruption: so may those ~~believers~~, whose hearts have been completely purified by faith, gradually depart from the faith, and fall so low as to account the *blood of the covenant, wherewith they were sanctified, an unholy thing?*

(3) The

(3) The prejudices of our opponents, are increased by their confounding Adamic* and Christian perfection; two perfections these, which are as distinct as the garden of Eden and the christian church. Adamic perfection came from God our Creator in paradise, before any trial of Adam's faithful obedience: and Christian perfection comes from God our Redeemer and Sanctifier in the Christian church, after a severe trial of the obedience of faith. Adamic perfection might be lost by doing despite to the perserving love of God our Creator; and Christian perfection may be lost by doing despite to the redeeming love of God our Saviour. Adamic perfection extended to the whole man: his body was perfectly sound in all its parts; and his soul in all its powers. But Christian perfection extends chiefly to the *will*, which is the capital, *moral* power of the soul; leaving the understanding ignorant of ten thousand things, and the body *dead because of sin*.

(4) Another capital mistake lies at the root of the opposition which our Calvinian brethren make

* Between Adamic and Christian perfection we place the gracious *innocence* of little children. They are not only full of peccability like Adam, but debilitated in all their animal and rational faculties, and of consequence, fit to become an easy prey to every temptation, through the *weakness* of their reason, and the *corruption* of their concupiscent and irascible powers. Nevertheless, till they begin personally to prefer moral evil to moral good, we may consider them as evangelically or graciously innocent. I say, graciously *innocent*, because, if we consider them in the seed of fallen Adam, we find them naturally *children of wrath*, and under the curse; but if we consider them in the *seed of the woman*, which was promised to Adam and to his posterity, we find them *graciously* placed in a state of redemption, and evangelical salvation. For the *free gift*, which is come upon all men to *justification*, belongs first to them, Christ having sanctified infancy first. And therefore we do not scruple to say, after our Lord, *Of such is the kingdom of heaven*. Now the kingdom of heaven is not of sinners as sinners; but of little children, as being *innocent* through the free-gift: or of adult, as being *penitent*, that is, turned from their sins to Christ.

against christian perfection. They imagine, that upon our principles, the grace of an adult Christian, is like the body of an adult man, which can grow no more. But this consequence flows from their fancy, and not from our doctrine. We exhort the strongest believers to *grow up to Christ in all things*; asserting that there is no holiness, and no happiness in heaven [much less upon earth] which do not admit of a growth, except the holiness and the happiness of God himself: because, in the very nature of things, a being absolutely perfect, and in every sense infinite, can never have any thing added to him. But infinite additions can be made to beings every way finite, such as glorified saints and holy angels are.

Hence it appears, that the comparison which we make between the ripeness of a fruit, and the maturity of a believer's grace, cannot be carried into an exact parallel. For a perfect Christian grows far more than a feeble believer, whose growth is still obstructed by the shady thorns of sin, and by the draining suckers of iniquity. Besides, a fruit which is come to its perfection, instead of growing, falls and decays: whereas a *babe in Christ* is called to grow, till he becomes a perfect Christian;—a perfect Christian, till he becomes a disembodied spirit;—a disembodied spirit, till he reaches the perfection of a saint, glorified in body and soul;—and such a saint, till he has fathomed the infinite depths of divine perfection, that is, to all eternity. For if we go on from *faith to faith*, and are spiritually changed from *glory to glory*, by beholding God darkly through a glass on earth; much more shall we experience improving changes, when we shall see Him as he is, and behold him face to face in various, numberless, and still brighter discoveries of himself in heaven. If Mr. Hill did but consider this, he would no more suppose that *christian perfection* is the pharisaic rickets, which put a stop to the growth

growth of believers, and turn them into "temporary monsters." Again :

Does a well-meant mistake defile the conscience? You inadvertently encourage idleness and drunkenness by kindly relieving an idle, drunken beggar, who imposes upon your charity by plausible lies: is this loving error a sin?—A blundering Apothecary sends you arsenic for alum; you use it as alum, and poison your child; but are you a murderer, if you give the fatal dose in love? Suppose the Tempter had secretly mixed some of the forbidden fruit, with other fruits that Eve had lawfully gathered for use; would she have sinned if she had inadvertently eaten of it, and given a share to her husband? After humbly confessing and deplored her undesigned error, her *secret* fault, her *accidental* offence, her *involuntary* trespass; would she not have been as innocent as ever?—I go farther still, and ask: may not a man who holds many *right* opinions, be a *perfect* lover of the world? And, by a parity of reason, may not a man, who holds many *wrong* opinions, be a *perfect* lover of God? Have not some Calvinists died with their hearts overflowing with perfect love, and their heads full of the notion, that God set his everlasting, absolute hatred upon myriads of men before the foundation of the world?—Nay, is it not even possible, that a man whose heart is renewed in love, should, through *mistaken humility*, or through *weakness of understanding*, oppose the name of *Christian perfection*, when he desires, and perhaps enjoys the thing?

Once more: does not St. Paul's rule hold in *spirituals*, as well as in *temporals*: *It is accepted according to what a man hath, and not according to what he hath not?* Does our Lord *actually* require more of believers than they can *actually* do through his grace? And when they do it to the best of their power, does he not see some *perfection* in their works, insignificant as those works may be?—Re-

move this immense heap of stones, says an indulgent father to his children; and be diligent according to your strength. While the eldest, a strong man, removes rocks; the youngest, a little child, is as cheerfully busy as any of the rest in carrying sands and pebbles. Now, may not his *child-like* obedience be as excellent in its degree, and, of consequence, as acceptable to his parent, as the *manly* obedience of his eldest brother? Nay, though he does next to nothing, may not his endeavours, if they are *more* cordial, excite a smile of *superior* approbation in his loving Father, who looks at the disposition of the heart, more than at the appearance of the work? Had the believers of *Sardis* cordially laid out *all* their talents, would our Lord have complained that he did not *find* their works *perfect* before *God*? Rev. iii. 2. And was it not according to this rule of perfection, that Christ testified, the poor widow, who had given but *two mites*, had nevertheless cast *more* into the treasury than all the rich, *though they had cast in much*; because, our Lord himself being judge, she had given *all that she had*? Now could she give, or did God require more than her *all*? And when she thus heartily gave her *all*, did she not do [evangelically speaking] a perfect work, according to her dispensation and circumstances?

We flatter ourselves that if these scriptural observations, and rational queries, do not remove Mr. Hill's prejudice, they will at least make way for a more candid perusal of the following pages.

S E C T. III.

SECTION III.

Several Objections raised against our Doctrine are solved, merely by considering the Nature of Christian Perfection.—It is absurd to say, that all our Christian Perfection is in the person of Christ.

I Repeat it, if our *pious* opponents decry the doctrine of *Christian perfection*, it is chiefly through misapprehension; it being as natural for *pious* men to recommend exalted piety, as for covetous persons to extol great riches. And this misapprehension frequently springs from their attention to the nature of *Christian perfection*. To prove it, I need only oppose our *definition* of *Christian perfection* to the *objections*, which are most commonly raised against our doctrine.

I. “Your doctrine of perfection leads to pride,”—Impossible! if *Christian perfection* is “*perfect humility*.”

II. “It exalts believers; but it is only to the state of the vain-glorious pharisee.”—Impossible! If our *perfection* is “*perfect humility*,” it makes us sink deeper into the state of the humble, justified publican.

III. “It fills men with the conceit of their own excellence, and makes them say to a weak brother, stand by, I am holier than thou.”—Impossible again! We do not preach *pharisaic*, but *christian perfection*, which consists in “*perfect poverty of spirit*,” and in that “*perfect charity*,” which vaunteth not itself, honours all men, and bears with the infirmities of the weak.

IV. “It sets *repentance* aside.” Impossible! for it is “*perfect repentance*.”

V. “It will make us slight Christ.”—More and more improbable! How can “*perfect faith*” in Christ, make us slight Christ? Could it be more absurd to say, that the perfect love of God will make us despise God?

VI. "It will supersede the use of mortification and watchfulness; for, if sin is dead, what need have we to mortify it, and to watch against it?"

This objection has some plausibility; I shall therefore answer it various ways.—(1) If Adam, in his state of paradisiacal perfection, needed perfect watchfulness and perfect mortification; how much more do we need them, who find the tree of the knowledge of good and evil planted, not only in the midst of our gardens, but in the midst of our houses, markets, and churches?—(2) When we are delivered from sin, are we delivered from *peccability* and *temptation*? When the inward man of sin is dead, is the Devil dead? Is the corruption that is in the world destroyed? And have we not still our five senses to keep with all diligence, as well as our hearts, that the tempter may not enter into us, or that we may not enter into his temptations?

Lastly: Jesus Christ, as son of Mary, was a *perfect* man? But how was he kept so to the end? Was it not by keeping his mouth with a bridle, while the ungodly was in his sight, and by guarding all his senses with perfect assiduity, that the wicked one might not touch him to his hurt? And if Christ our head kept his human perfection only through *watchfulness*, and constant self-denial; is it not absurd to suppose, that his perfect members can *keep* their perfection, without treading in his steps?

VII. Another objection probably stands in Mr. Hill's way: it runs thus: "Your doctrine of perfection makes it needless for perfect Christians to say the Lord's prayer: for if God vouchsafes to keep us this day without sin, we shall have no need to pray at night, that God would forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us."

We answer: (1) Though a perfect Christian does not trespass voluntarily, and break the law of love, yet he daily breaks the law of Adamic perfection, through the imperfection of his bodily and mental powers; and he has frequently a deeper sense of

these

these involuntary trespasses, than many weak believers have of their voluntary breaches of the moral law. (2) Although a perfect Christian has a witness that his sins are now forgiven in the court of his conscience, yet he *knows the terrors of the Lord*: he hastens to meet the awful day of God: he waits for the appearance of our Lord Jesus Christ, in the character of a righteous Judge: he keeps an eye to the awful tribunal, before which he must soon be *justified or condemned by his words*: he is conscious that his final *justification* is not yet come; and therefore he would think himself a monster of stupidity and pride, if, with an eye to his absolution in the great day, he scrupled saying to the end of his life, *Forgive us our trespasses*.—(3) He is surrounded with sinners, who daily *trespass against him*, and whom he is daily bound to *forgive*; and his praying that he may be forgiven now, and in the great day, *as he forgives others*, reminds him that he may forfeit his pardon, and binds him more and more to the performance of the important duty of forgiving his enemies.—And (4) his charity is so ardent that it melts him, as it were, into the common mass of mankind: bowing himself therefore, under the enormous load of all the wilful trespasses which his fellow-mortals, and particularly his relatives and his brethren daily commit against God, he says with a fervor that imperfect Christians seldom feel: *Forgive us our trespasses, &c.—We are heartily sorry for our misdoings* (my own, and those of my fellow-sinners:) *The remembrance of them is grievous unto us: the burthen of them is intolerable.* Nor do we doubt, but, when the Spirit of mourning leads a numerous assembly of supplicants into the vale of humiliation, the person who puts the shoulder of faith most readily to the common burden of sin, and heaves the most powerfully in order to roll the enormous load into the Redeemer's grave, is the most perfect penitent—the most exact observer of the

the apostolic precept, *Bear ye one another's burdens,*
and so fulfil the law of Christ; and, of consequence,
we do not scruple to say, that such a person is the
most perfect Christian in the whole assembly.

If Mr. Hill considers these answers, we doubt not
but he will confess that his opposition to Christian
perfection chiefly springs from his inattention to our
definition of it, which I once more sum up in these
comprehensive lines of Mr. Wesley.

O let me gain Perfection's height !
O let me into nothing fall !
(As less than nothing in thy sight)
And feel that Christ is all in all !

VIII. Our opponents produce another plausible
objection, which runs thus: "It is plain from
your account of Christian perfection, that adult
believers are *free from sin*; their hearts being pu-
rified by perfect faith, and filled with perfect love.
Now sin is that which humbles us, and drives us
to Christ, and therefore, if we were free from in-
dwelling sin, we should lose a most powerful in-
centive to *humility*, which is the greatest ornament
of a true Christian."

We answer: sin never humbled any soul. Who
has more sin than *Satan*? And who is prouder?—
Did sin make our first parents humble? If it did
not, how do our brethren suppose that its nature is
altered for the better?—Who was humbler than
Christ? but was he indebted to *sin* for his *humility*?—
Do we not see daily, that the more sinful men
are, the prouder they are also?—Did Mr. Hill
never observe, that the *holier* a believer is, the
humbler he shows himself? And what is *holiness*,
but the *reverse of sin*?—If sin is necessary to make
us *humble*, and to keep us near *Christ*; does it not
follow that glorified saints, whom all acknowledge
to be *sinless*, are all proud despisers of *Christ*?—
If *humility* is *obedience*, and if *sin* is *disobedience*, is
it

it not as absurd to say, that *sin* will make us *humble*, i. e. *obedient*; as it is to affirm that *rebellion* will make us *loyal*, and *adultery*, *chaste*?—See we not *sin* enough, when we look ten or twenty years back, to humble us to the dust for ever, if *sin* can do it? Need we plead for any more of it in our hearts or lives?—If the sins of our youth do not humble us, are the sins of our old age likely to do it?—If we contend for the life of the man of *sin*, that he may subdue our pride; do we not take a large stride after those who say, “*Let us sin that grace may abound.* *Let us continue full of indwelling sin that humility may increase?*”—What is, after all, the evangelical method of getting humility? Is it not to look at Christ in the manger, in Gethsemane, or on the cross; to consider him when he washes his disciples feet; and obediently to listen to him when he says, *Learn of me to be meek and lowly in heart?*—Where does the gospel plead the cause of the *Barabbas*, and the thieves within? Where does it say, that they may indeed be nailed to the cross, and have their legs broken; but that their life must be left whole within them, lest we should be proud of their death?—Lastly, What is indwelling *sin* but indwelling pride? At least is not inbred pride one of the chief ingredients of indwelling *sin*? And how can pride be productive of humility? Can a serpent beget a dove? And will not men gather grapes from thorns, sooner than humility of heart from haughtiness of spirit?

IX. The strange mistake which I detest, would not be so prevalent among our prejudiced brethren, if they were not deceived by the plausibility of the following argument. “When believers are humbled for a thing they are humbled by it: but believers are humbled for *sin*; and therefore, they are humbled by *sin*.”

The flaw of this argument is in the first proposition. We readily grant that penitents are humbled for *sin*; or, in other terms, that they humbly repent

repent of sin: but we deny that they are *humbled by sin*. To show the absurdity of the whole argument, I need only produce a sophism exactly parallel. "When people are blooded for a thing, they are blooded by it: but people are sometimes blooded for a cold: and therefore people are sometimes blooded by a cold."

X. "We do not assert that all perfection is imaginary. Our meaning is that all Christian perfection is *in Christ*; and that we are perfect in his person, and not in our own."

Ans. If you mean by our being *perfect* only *in Christ*, that we can attain to Christian perfection no other way, than by being perfectly grafted *in him the true Vine*; and by deriving, like vigorous branches, the *perfect* sap of his *perfect* righteousness, to enable us to bring forth fruit unto *perfection*: we are entirely agreed: for we perpetually assert, that nothing but, *Christ in us the hope of glory*, nothing but *Christ dwelling in our hearts by faith*; or, which is all one, nothing but *the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus*, can make us free from the law of sin, and perfect us in love.

But, as we never advanced, that *Christian* perfection is attainable any other way, than by a faith that *roots and grounds us in Christ*; we doubt some mystery of iniquity lies hid under these equivocal phrases, "All our perfection is in Christ's person: —We are perfect in him, and not in ourselves."

Should those who use them, insinuate by such language, that we need not, cannot be perfect, by an inherent personal conformity to God's holiness, because *Christ* is thus perfect for us: or should they mean, that we are *perfect in him*, just as country freeholders, entirely strangers to state-affairs, are *perfect* politicians in the knights of the shire who represent them in parliament:—as the sick in a hospital are, *perfectly* healthy in the physician that gives them his attendance:—as the blind man enjoyed *perfect* sight in *Christ* when he saw walking men

men like moving trees:—as the filthy leper was perfectly clean in our Lord, before he had felt the power of Christ's gracious words, *I will, be thou clean*:—or, as hungry Lazarus was perfectly fed in the person of the rich man, at whose gate he lay starving—should this, I say, be your meaning, we are in conscience bound to oppose it, for the reasons contained in the following queries.

(1) If believers are perfect, because Christ is perfect for them; why does the Apostle exhort them to go on to perfection?

(2) If all our perfection is inherent in Christ, is it not strange, that St. Paul should exhort us to perfect holiness in the fear of God, by cleansing ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit? Did not Christ perfect his own holiness? And will his personal sanctity be imperfect, till we have cleansed ourselves from all defilement?

(3) If Christ is perfect for us, why does St. James say, *Let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect*? Is Christ's perfection suspended upon the perfect work of our patience?

(4) Upon the scheme which I oppose, what does St. Peter mean, when he says, *After ye have suffered awhile, the Lord make you perfect*? What has our suffering awhile to do with Christ's perfection? Was not Christ made perfect through his own sufferings?

(5) If believers were perfect in Christ's person, they would all be equally perfect. But is this the case? Does not St. John talk of some who are perfected, and of others who are not yet made perfect in love? Besides, the Apostle exhorts us to be perfect, not in Antinomian notions, but in all the will of God, and in every good work; and common sense dictates, that there is some difference between our good works, and the person of Christ.

(6) Does not our Lord Himself show, that his personal righteousness will by no means be accepted instead of our personal perfection, where he says, “*Every branch in me that beareth not fruit (or whose*

whose fruit never grows to any perfection. See Luke viii. 14.) *My Father taketh away, far from imputing to it my perfect fruitfulness?*

(7) In the nature of things, can Christ's perfection supply the want of that perfection which he calls us to? Is there not a more essential difference between Christ's perfection and that of a believer, than there is between the perfection of a rose and that of the grass of the field?—between the perfection of a soaring eagle and that of a creeping insect?—If our Lord is the head of the church and we the members, is it not absurd to suppose that his perfection becomes us in every respect? Were I allowed to carry on a scriptural metaphor, I would ask: Is not the perfection of the *head* very different from that of the *hand*? And do we not take advantage of the credulity of the simple, when we make them believe, that an impenitent adulterer and murderer is perfect in Christ; or, if you please, that a crooked leg and cloven foot are *perfectly* handsome, if they do but somehow belong to a beautiful face?

(8) Let us illustrate this a little more. Does not the Redeemer's *personal* perfection consist in his being *God and man in one person*;—in his being *eternally begotten by the Father as the Son of God*; and *unbegotten in time by a father, as the son of man*;—in his having given his life a ransom for all;—in his having taken it up again; and his standing in the midst of the throne, able to save to the uttermost all that come unto God through him? Consider this, candid believer, and say if any man or angel can decently hope, that such an incomunicable perfection can ever fall to his share.

(9) As the Redeemer's personal perfection cannot suit the *redeemed*, no more can the personal perfection of the *redeemed* be found in the *Redeemer*. A believer's perfection consists in such a degree of *faith as works by perfect love*. And does not this high degree of faith chiefly imply: (1) Uninterrupted self-diffidence, self-denial, self-despair?—

(2) A

(2) A heart-felt, ceaseless recourse to the blood, merits, and righteousness of Christ?—And (3) A grateful love to him, *because he first loved us*; and fervent charity towards all mankind *for his sake*? Three things these, which in the very nature of things, either cannot be in the Saviour at all; or cannot possibly be in him, in the same manner in which they must be in believers.

(10) Is not the doctrine of our being perfect in Christ's person, big with mischief? Does it not open a *refuge of lies* to the loosest ranters in the land? Are there none who say, we are perfect in Christ's person. In him we have perfect chastity and honesty, perfect temperance and meekness; and we should be guilty of pharisaic insolence if we patched his perfection with the filthy rags of our personal holiness? And has not this doctrine a direct tendency to set godliness aside, and to countenance gross Antinomianism?

Lastly. When our Lord preached the doctrine of perfection, did he not do it in such a manner as to demonstrate that our perfection must be *personal*. Did he ever say, *If thou wilt be perfect, only believe that I am perfect for thee*? On the contrary did he not declare, *If thou wilt be perfect, sell what thou hast; [part with all that stands in thy way;] and follow me in the way of perfection*?—And again: *Do good to them that hate you, that ye may be the children of your Father who is in heaven; for he sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust, &c. Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father who is in heaven is perfect*? Who can read these words and not see, that the perfection which Christ preaches, is a perfection of holy dispositions, productive of holy actions in all his followers? And that, of consequence, it is a *personal* perfection, as much *inherent* in us, and yet as much *derived* from him, and *dependent* upon him, as the perfection of our bodily health? The chief difference consisting in this; that the perfection of our health comes to us from God in Christ,

as the God of nature; whereas our Christian perfection comes to us from God in Christ, as the God of grace.

S E C T I O N IV.

Mr. Hill's first Argument against Christian Perfection is taken from the IXth and XVth Articles of the Church of England. These Articles properly understood are not contrary to that Doctrine.—That our Church holds it, is proved by thirteen Arguments.—She opposes Pharisaic Perfection and not Christian Perfection.—Eight Reasons are produced to shew, that it is absurd to embrace the Doctrine of a Death-Purgatory because our Reformers and Martyrs, in following after the Perfection of humility, have used some unguarded Expressions, which seem to bear hard upon the Doctrine of Christian Perfection.

IN the preceding sections I have laid the axe at the root of some prejudices, and cut up a variety of objections. The controversial field is cleared. The engagement may begin: nay, it is already begun: for Mr. Hill in his *Creed for Perfectionists*, and Mr. Toplady in his *Caveat against unfound doctrines*, have brought up, and fired at our doctrine two pieces of ecclesiastical artillery;—the IXth and XVth articles of our church: and they conclude that the contents of these doctrinal canons absolutely demolish the perfection we contend for. The report of their wrong-pointed ordnance, and the noise they make about our subscriptions, are loud; but that we need not be afraid of the shot, will, I hope, appear from the following observations.

The design of the XVth article of our church is pointed out by the title, “*Of Christ alone without sin.*” From this title we conclude, that the scope and design of the Article is not to secure to Christ

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the honour of being *alone cleansed from sin*; because such an honour would be a reproach to his *original and uninterrupted purity*, which placed him far above the need of *cleaning*. Nor does the Article drop the least hint about the impossibility of our being *cleansed from sin* before we go into the purgatory of the Calvinists; I mean, the chambers of death. What our church intends, is to distinguish *Christ* from all mankind, and especially from the virgin *Mary*, whom the Papists assert to have been always totally free from original and actual sin. Our church does this by maintaining: (1) That *Christ* was born without the least taint of original sin, and never committed any actual transgression:—(2) That all other men, the virgin *Mary* and the most holy believers not excepted, are the very reverse of *Christ* in both these respects; all being conceived in original sin, and offending in many things, even after baptism*, and with all the helps which we have under the Christian dispensation to keep us *without sin* from day to day.—And therefore (3) That if we say we have no sin—if we pretend, like some Pelagians, that we have no *original sin*; or if we intimate, like some pharisees, that “we never did any harm in all our life,” i. e. that we have no *actual sin*, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us; there being absolutely no adult person without sin in those respects, except our Lord Jesus Christ.

That this is the genuine sense of the Article appears: (1) By the absurdity which follows from

* The Rev. Mr. *Toplady* in his *Historic Proof*, page 235, informs us, that a popish Archbishop of St. Andrews condemned *Patrick Hamilton* to death, for holding, among other doctrines, “*That children incontinent after baptism are sinners*,” or, which is all one, that baptism does not absolutely take away original sin. This anecdote is important, and shews, that our Church levels at a popish error, the words of her Articles, which Mr. *Hill* and Mr. *Toplady* suppose to be levelled at Christian perfection.

the contrary sentiment. For, if these words, “*Christ alone without sin,*” are to be taken in an absolute and unlimited sense; if the word *alone* entirely excludes all mankind, *at all times*; if it is levelled at our *being cleansed from sin*, as well as at our *having been always free from original and actual pollution*;—if this is the case, I say, it is evident that, not only Fathers in Christ, but also, *Enoch and Elijah, St. John and St. Paul* are to this day tainted with sin, and must to all eternity continue so, lest Mr. Hill’s opinion of *Christ alone without sin*, should not be true.

(2) Our sentiment is confirmed by the Article itself, part of which runs thus: “*Christ, in the truth of our nature, was made like unto us in all things, sin only excepted, from which he was clearly void, both in his flesh and in his spirit. He came to be a lamb without spot:*”—and sin, as St. John says, was not in him. But all we the rest, although baptized and born again in Christ,” [i. e. although we have from our infancy all the helps that the Christian dispensation affords men to keep them without sin] “*yet we offend in many things*” (after our baptism) “*and if we say*” [as the above-mentioned Pelagians and pharisees] “*that we have no*” [original or actual] “*sin,*” [i. e. that we are like Christ in either of these respects: our conception, infancy, childhood, youth, and age being all taken into the account] “*we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us.*”

Having thus opened the plain, rational, and scriptural sense in which we subscribe to our XVth Article, it remains to make a remark upon the Ninth.

Some bigotted Pelagians deny original sin, or the Adamic infection of our nature, and some bigotted Papists suppose that this infection is entirely done away in baptism: in opposition to both these our church prudently requires our subscription to her IXth Article, which asserts: (1) That *the fault and corruption*

corruption of our nature is a melancholy reality : and (2) That this fault, corruption, or infection doth remain in them who are regenerated ; that is, in them who are baptized, or made children of God according to the Christian dispensation. For every person who has attentively read our liturgy knows, that these expressions, *baptized, regenerated, and made a member of Christ and a child of God*, are synonymous in the language of our church. Now, because we have acknowledged by our subscription to the Ninth Article, that the *infection of nature* is not done away in baptism, but does remain in them which are regenerate, or baptized, Mr. Hill thinks himself authorised to impose upon us the yoke of indwelling sin for life ; supposing that we cannot be fair subscribers to that Article, unless we renounce the glorious liberty of God's children, and embrace the Antinomian gospel, which is summed up in these unguarded words of Luther, quoted by Bogatzky in his *Golden Treasury**. “*The sins of a Christian are for his good, and if he had no sin he would not be so well off ;—neither would prayer flow so well :*” Can any thing be either more unscriptural or absurd ? What unprejudiced person does not see, We may with the greatest consistency maintain, that baptism does not remove the Adamic infection of sin, and that nevertheless this infection may be removed before death.

Nevertheless we are willing to make Mr. Hill all the concessions we can, consistently with a good conscience. If, by “*the infection of nature*” he understands the natural ignorance, which has infected our understanding ; the natural forgetfulness, which has affected our memory : the inbred debility of all our mental powers, and the poisonous seeds of mortality, which infect all men from head to foot, and hinder the strongest believers from serving God with all the fervor they would be capable of, were they not fallen from paradisiacal perfection, under the curse of a body sentenced to die, and dead be-

* See the edition Printed in London in 1773, page 328.

cause of sin :—If Mr. Hill, I say, understands this by “*the infection of nature*,” we believe that such an infection, with all the natural, innocent appetites of the flesh, remains not only in those whom the scriptures call *babes in Christ*, but also in *fathers*; there being no adult believer that may not say, as well as *Christ, Adam, or St. Paul, I thirst.—I am hungry.—I want an help meet for me.—I know but in part.—I see darkly through a glass—I groan, being burdened.—He that marrieth sinneth not.—It is better to marry than to burn, &c.*

But, if Mr. Hill, by “*the infection of nature*,” means the *sinful lusts* of the flesh, such as mental drunkenness, gluttony, whoredom, &c.—or, if he understands unloving, diabolical tempers, such as envy, pride, stubbornness, malice, sinful anger, ungodly jealousy, unbelief, fretfulness, impatience, hypocrisy, revenge, or any moral opposition to the will of God:—If Mr. Hill, I say, understands this, by “*the infection of nature*;” and if he supposes, that these evils must *radically* and *necessarily* remain in the hearts of all believers [*fathers in Christ not excepted*] till death comes to *cleanse the thoughts of their hearts* by the inspiration of his ill-smelling breath; we must take the liberty of dissenting from him; and we produce the following arguments to prove, that whatever Mr. Hill may insinuate to the contrary, the Church of England is not against that doctrine of evangelical perfection which we vindicate.

I. Our church can never be so inconsistent as to level her articles against what she ardently prays for in her liturgy: but she ardently prays for Christian perfection, or for perfect love in this life: therefore she is not against Christian perfection. The second proposition of this argument can alone be disputed, and I support it by the well-known collect in the communion-service, “*Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of thy holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love thee, and worthily*

worthily magnify thy holy name, through Jesus Christ our Lord." Here we see (1) The nature of Christian perfection; it is *perfect love*; (2) The seat of this perfect love; *a heart cleansed from its own thoughts*: (3) The blessed effect of it, *a worthy magnifying of God's holy name*: (4) Its author, *God*, of whom the blessing is asked. (5) The immediate means of it, *the inspiration of the holy Spirit*: and lastly, the gracious procurer of it, *our Lord Jesus Christ*.

II. This vein of godly desire after Christian perfection runs through her daily service. In her confession she prays, "Restore thou them that are penitent, according to thy promises, &c. that hereafter we may live a *godly, righteous, and sober life* to the glory of thy holy name." Now *godliness, righteousness, and sobriety* being the sum of our duty towards God, our neighbour, and ourselves, are also the sum of Christian perfection. Nor does our Church absolve any, but such as desire that the rest of their life may be *pure and holy*, so that at the last they may come to God's eternal joy: plainly intimating that we may get a *pure heart*, and lead a *pure and holy life*, without going into a death-purgatory: and that those who do not attain to purity of heart and life, that is, to perfection, are in danger of missing God's eternal joy.

III. Hence it is, that she is not ashamed to pray daily for *sinless purity*, in the *Te Deum*: "Vouchsafe, O Lord, to keep us this day without sin," that is, *sinless*; for I suppose, that the title of our XVth Article, "*Of Christ alone without sin*," means *Of Christ alone sinless* from his conception to his last gasp. This deep petition is perfectly agreeable to the collects for the ix. xvii. xviii. and xixth Sundays after Trinity. "Grant to us the spirit to think, and do always such things as be rightful,—that we may be enabled to live according to thy will,"—i. e. to live without sin.—We pray thee, that thy grace may always prevent and follow us, and make us to be continually given to all good works.'

works." &c.—“Grant thy people grace to withstand the temptations of the world, the flesh, and the devil, and with *pure hearts* and *minds* to follow thee.”—“Mercifully grant that thy holy Spirit may in all things direct and rule our hearts.”—Again: “May it please thee, that by the wholesome medicines of the doctrine delivered by him [Luke, the evangelist and physician of the soul,] all the diseases of our souls may be healed,” &c. St. Luke's day.—“Mortify and kill in us all vices” [and among them envy, selfishness, and pride;] “and so strengthen us by thy grace, that by the innocence of our lives, and constancy of our faith even unto death, we may glorify thy holy name,” &c. The Innocents day.—“Grant us the help of thy grace, that in keeping thy commandments we may please thee both in will and deed.” a Sunday after Trinity.—“Direct, sanctify, and govern both our hearts and bodies, in the ways of thy laws and in the works of thy commandments, that we may be preserved” [*in those ways and works*]. “body and soul.”—“Prevent us in all our doings, &c. and further us with thy continual help; that in all our works begun, continued, and ended in thee, we may glorify thy holy name.” Communion Service.—Once more: “Grant that in all our sufferings here on earth, &c. we may steadfastly look up to heaven, and by faith behold the glory that shall be revealed; and being filled with the Holy Ghost, may learn to bless our persecutors by the example of thy first martyr,” &c. St. Stephen's day. It is worth our notice, that *bleffing our persecutors and murderers*, is the last beatitude, the highest instance of Christian perfection, and the most difficult of all the duties, which [if we may believe our Lord] constitute us perfect, in our sphere, *as our heavenly Father is perfect*. See Mat. v. 11. 44, 45. 48.

IV. Perfect love, i. e. Christian perfection instantaneously springs from perfect faith: and as our church would have all her members perfect in love,

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she requires them to pray thus for perfect *faith*, which must be obtained in this life or never. "Grant us so perfectly, and without all doubt to believe in thy Son Jesus Christ, that our faith in thy sight may never be reproved." *St. Thomas's day.*

V. Our Lord teaches us to ask for the highest degree of Christian perfection, where he commands us, *When we pray to say, &c. Thy kingdom come; thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.* And our church, by introducing this deep prayer in all her services, shows how greatly Mr. Hill is mistaken when he supposes, that she looks upon our doctrine of Christian perfection as "*shocking*."

Should that gentleman object that although our church bids us pray for Christian perfection in the above-cited collects, and in our Lord's prayer, yet she does not intimate that these deep prayers may be answered in this life: I oppose to that argument, not only the word *on earth*, which she so frequently mentions in the Lord's prayer, but also her own words, "Everlasting God, who art more ready to hear than we to pray, and art wont to give more than we desire, &c. pour down upon us the abundance of thy mercy, &c. xii. Sunday after Trinity. Mr. Hill must therefore excuse us, if we side with our praying church, and are not ashamed to say with St. Paul, *Glory be to him that is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us.* Eph. iii. 20.

VI. That our church cannot reasonably be against *Christian Perfection*, I farther prove thus: what the Church of England recommends as the end of baptism, can never be contrary to her doctrine. But she recommends a death unto sin, or *Christian perfection*, as the end of baptism: therefore she cannot be against *Christian perfection*. The second proposition, which alone is disputable, I prove by these words of her Catechism: "What

is the inward or spiritual grace in baptism? A death unto sin, and a new birth unto righteousness."—Hence she prays at the grave, "We beseech thee to raise us from the *death of sin* to the life of righteousness, that when we shall depart this life we may rest in him" (*Christ.*) Now, that a *death of sin*, is the end of baptism, and that this end is never fully answered till this death has fully taken place, is evident by the following extract from our baptismal office: "Grant that the old Adam in this person may be so buried, that the new man may be raised up in him.—Grant that all carnal affections" (and consequently all the carnal mind, and all inbred sin) may die in him; and that all things belonging to the Spirit may live and grow in him.—Grant that the person now to be baptized may receive the fulness of thy grace.—Grant, that he being dead to sin, and living to righteousness, and being buried with Christ in his death, may crucify the old man, and utterly abolish the whole body of sin." How can we maintain with our church, that we are to crucify, mortify, [i. e. kill,] and utterly abolish the whole body of sin; so as to be dead to sin, and to have the old Adam buried in this life; and yet hold with Mr. Hill, that this *whole body of sin*, which we are utterly to abolish is to remain wholly and utterly un-abolished till death come to abolish it?

VII. Our church is not against that end of the Lord's supper, which she constantly inculcates in *Christian perfection*: therefore our church is not against *Christian perfection*. The second proposition, which alone needs proof, is founded upon these deep words of our communion service. "Grant us so to eat the flesh of thy dear Son Jesus Christ, and to drink his blood, that our sinful bodies may be made clean by his body, and our souls washed through his precious blood, and that we may evermore dwell in him and he in us." These words express the height of *Christian perfection*, nor has

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the Lord's supper had its full end upon us, till that prayer is answered.

VIII. Our church is not against what she considers as the end of Christ's nativity, and of his being presented in the temple. But what she considers as the end, is *Christian perfection*: therefore she is not against *Christian perfection*. The second proposition of this argument is founded, (1) Upon the proper preface for *Christmas-day* in the communion service. "Christ, &c. was made very man, &c. without spot of sin, to make us clean from all sin:" And (2, upon these words of the collect for the presentation of Christ in the temple: "We humbly beseech thee, that, as thy only begotten Son was presented in the temple in substance of our flesh: so we may be presented unto thee with pure and clean hearts."

IX. The same argument holds good with respect to our Lord's circumcision, his keeping of the pass-over with unleavened bread, his ascending into heaven—and his sending the Comforter from thence. That, according to our church, the end of these events was our *Christian perfection* appears by the following extracts from her collects. "Grant us the true circumcision of the spirit, that our hearts and all our members being mortified from all worldly and carnal lusts, we may in all things obey, &c. [The circumcision of Christ.]—Grant us so to put away the leaven of malice and wickedness, that we may alway serve thee in pureness of living and truth. [1 Sunday after Easter.] Grant. &c. that we may also in heart and mind thither [to heaven] ascend, and with him [Christ] continually dwell, &c. Ascension day.—Grant us, by the same spirit, to have a right judgment in all things, and evermore to rejoice in his holy comfort. [Whitsunday.]

X. Our church cannot reasonably oppose what she ardently wishes to all her communicants, and what she earnestly asks for and strongly recommends to all her members: but she thus wishes,
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asks, and recommends, *deliverance from all sins* and *perfect charity*, that is, *Christian perfection*; and therefore she cannot be against *Christian perfection*. The second proposition is founded, (1) Upon these words of the absolution, which she gives to all her communicants. “ Almighty God, &c. pardon and deliver you from all your sins, confirm and strengthen you in all goodness.”—(2) Upon her collect for quinquagesima Sunday: “ Send thy Holy Ghost, and pour into our hearts that most excellent gift of charity, the very bond of peace and of all virtues :” (St. Paul calls it the bond of perfection.)—And (3) Upon the definition which she gives us of *Charity* in her homilies. “ Charity [says she] is to love God with all our heart, all our soul, and all our powers and strength.—With all our heart: that is to say, that our heart, mind, and study to be set to believe his word, and to love him above all things, that we love best in heaven or in earth. With all our soul: that is to say, that our chief joy and delight be set upon him, and our whole life given to his service.—With all our power: that is to say, that with our hands and feet, with our eyes and ears, our mouths and tongues, and with all our parts and powers, both of body and soul, we should be given to the keeping of his commandments. This is the principal part of *charity*, but it is not the whole: for *charity* is also to love every man, good and evil, friend and foe, whatsoever cause be given to the contrary.” *Hom. on Charity.*—“ Of charity [St. John] says, He that doth keep God’s word and commandment, in him is truly the perfect love of God, &c. And St. John wrote not this as a subtle saying, &c. but as a most certain and necessary truth.” *Homily of Faith, Part II.*—“ Thus it is declared unto you, what true charity or *Christian* love is, &c. which loves who-soever keepeth, not only towards God, whom he is bound to love above all things, but also towards his neighbour, as well friend as foe, it shall surely keep

keep him from all offence of God, and just offence of man." *Homily of Charity, Part II.*—Again: "Every man persuadeth himself to be in *charity*, but let him examine his own heart, his life and conversation, and he shall truly discern, whether he be in perfect *charity* or not. For he that followeth not his own will, but giveth himself earnestly to God, to do all his will and commandment, he may be sure that he loveth God above all things, or else surely he loveth him not, whatsoever he pretend." *Homily on Charity.*—Once more: "Perfect *Patience* careth not what, nor how much it suffereth, nor of whom it suffereth, whether of friend or foe, but studieth to suffer innocently. Yea he in whom perfect *Charity* is, careth so little to revenge, that he rather studieth to do good for evil, according to the most perfect example of Christ upon the cross.—Such *charity* and love as Christ shewed in his passion, should we bear one to another, if we will be his *true servants*. If we love but them that love us, what great thing can we do? We must be perfect in our *charity*, even as our Father in heaven is perfect." *Homily for Good Friday.*

XI. That state which our Church wants all her priests to bring their flocks to, is not a "shocking" or chimerical state: but she wants all her priests to bring all their flocks to *perfection in Christ*, that is to *Christian perfection*: and therefore the state of *Christian perfection* is neither shocking nor chimerical. The minor, which alone is contestable, rests upon this awful part of the charge, which all her bishops give to her priests. "See that you never cease your labour, care, and diligence, until you have done all that lieth in you, to bring all such as shall be committed to your charge, unto that agreement of faith, and that ripeness and *perfection of age in Christ*, that there be no place left among you for *error in religion, or viciousness in life.*" *Ordin. Office.*

XII. Nor is our Church less strict with the laity than with the clergy ; for she receives none into her congregation, but such as profess a determination of coming up to *Christian perfection*. Accordingly all her members have solemnly *promised and vowed* by their sponsors at their baptism, and in their own persons when they were confirmed by the bishop : (1) *To renounce the devil and all his works, the pomps and vanities of this wicked world, without reserve, and all the sinful lusts of the flesh :* (2) *To believe all the articles of the Christian faith ;* and (3) *To keep God's holy will and commandments, and walk in the same all the days of their life.* And is not this vowing to *perfect holiness in the fear of God ?* Does the first part of this sacred engagement, leave any room for a moment's agreement with the devil, the world, or the flesh ? Does the second make the least allowance, for one doubt with respect to any one article of the Christian faith ? Or the third, for one wilful breach of *God's commandments ?*—Again, are not these commandments thus summed up in our Church-Catechism : *I learn in them my duty towards God, which is to love him with all my heart—and my duty towards my neighbour, which is to love him as myself ?* Is not this *perfect love, or Christian perfection ?* And have we not vowed to *walk in the same all the days of our life ?* As many Churchmen therefore, as make conscience of keeping their baptismal vow, must not only *go on*, but attain, *unto perfection* ; and if there have been no perfect Christians in our Church, all her members have died in the actual breach of the awful promise, which they made in their baptism : a supposition too shocking either to make or allow.

If you ask, Where are those perfect Churchmen or Christians ? I answer : that if the *perfect love* that *keeps the commandments* is unattainable, our baptismal vow is absurd and detestable ; for it is both irrational and very wicked to vow things absolutely

solutely impossible. But this is not all : upon that supposition the Bible, which makes such frequent mention of the *perfect* and of *perfection*, is no better than a Popish legend ; for that book ought to rank among religious romances, which recommends imaginary things as if they were indubitable realities. So sure then as the Bible is true, there *are* or *may be* perfect Christians : but

Virtutem incolumem odimus,
Sublatam ex oculis quærimus invidi.

“ While we honour dead saints, we call those who are alive enthusiasts, hypocrites, or heretics : ” it is not proper therefore, to expose them to the darts of envy and malice. And suppose living witnesses of perfect love were produced, what would be the consequence ? Their testimony would be excepted against by those who disbelieve the doctrine of Christian perfection, just as the testimony of the believers, who enjoy the sense of their justification, is rejected by those who do not believe, that a clear experience of the peace and pardoning love of God is attainable in this life. If the original, direct perfection of Christ himself, was horribly blackened by his bigotted opposers, how could the derived, reflected perfection of his members, escape the same treatment from men, whose hearts are tinctured with a degree of the same bigotry ?

Add to this, that in order to harden unbelievers, *the accuser of the brethren* perpetually obtrudes upon the church, not only false witnesses of *pardon*ing grace, but also vain pretenders to *perfect* love : for he knows, that by putting off as many counterfeits as he possibly can, he will give the enemies of the truth room to say, that there is in the Church no gold purified seven times,—no coin truly stamped with the king’s image, *perfect* love ;

and bearing the royal inscription, *Holiness unto the Lord**.

Therefore, instead of saying, that this or the other eminent believer has attained Christian perfection, we rest the cause upon the experience of St. John, and of those with whom that Apostle could say:—*There is no occasion of stumbling in him that loveth.*—*Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment, because [with respect to holiness] as he is [in his human nature] so are we in this world*—pure, undefiled, and filled with perfect love; with this difference nevertheless, that he is in the kingdom of glory, and we in the kingdom of grace: he has a glorified, and we a corruptible body: he has the *original* perfection of a tree, and we the *derived* perfection of branches growing upon it. Or, to use another comparison, He shines with the communicative perfection of a pure, bright, unextinguishable fire; and we with the borrowed, and yet inherent perfection of a coal entirely lighted. The burning mineral was black, cold and filthy, before it was impregnated with the perfection of the fire; it continues bright, hot, and pure only so long as it remains in the fire that kindled it: for if it falls from it by any accident, the shining perfection which it had acquired gradually vanishes, and it becomes a filthy cinder, the black emblem of an apostate. So true is that saying of our Lord! *Without me, or rather,*

* Among the professors, who have lately set up as witnesses of *perfect love*, I am not a little surprised to find Mr. Hill himself: this gentleman, who has treated Mr. Wesley with such severity, for standing up in defence of perfect love, or Christian perfection, most solemnly ranks himself among the *perfect lovers* of their neighbour, yea of their adversaries! Hear him make his astonishing profession before the world, at the end of his pamphlet, called, *The admonisher admonished*.—“ I most solemnly declare” (says he) “ that I am in perfect charity with Dr. Adams, as well as with you, Sir, my unknown antagonist.” I never yet heard a Perfectionist make so solemn, and so public a profession of *perfect love*.

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separate from me ye can do nothing: ye can neither get, nor keep, light and heat, knowledge and love. But, when we live not, and Christ liveth in us; when our life is hid with Christ in God, when we dwell in God and God dwells in us; then it is, that our love is made perfect, and that [loving one another even as Christ hath loved us] as he is loving, so are we in this world, 1 John iv. 17.

Such was the avowed experience of Fathers in Christ in the apostolic times, and such it undoubtedly is also in our days. Nor can I persuade myself that our Church trifles with her children when she describes the perfect Christian thus, in her Homily for Good Friday. “ He in whom perfect charity is, careth so little to revenge, that he rather studieth to do good for evil, according to the most perfect example of Christ upon the cross.”

XIII. If Mr. Hill replies, that our Church speaks there of a mere non-entity: and that we can never have a grain of perfect charity in this life, because the old leaven of *indwelling sin* will always corrupt the sweetness of our tempers before God; I answer his objection by producing my last proof, that our Church holds the very doctrine, for which we are called *Perfectionists*. Hear her pressing *perfect* love and purity upon all her communicants: “ *Have a lively and steadfast faith in Christ, &c. and be in perfect charity with all men.*” Com. Office.—And (2) Upon all her feeble children. *Though your power be weak, [says she to them] yet Christ is risen again to strengthen you in your battle: his holy Spirit shall help your infirmities. In trust of his mercy take you in hand to purge this old leaven of sin, that corrupteth and sourereth the sweetness of our life before God: that ye may be as new and fresh dough, void of all four leaven of wickedness; so shall ye show yourselves to be sweet bread to God, that he may have his delight in you?* [Hom. on the Resur.]

All the preceding arguments support our sense of the IXth and XVth Articles: and if Mr. Hill

urges, that our Church contradicts herself, and sometimes pleads for Christian imperfection and a death purgatory; we reply, that, supposing the charge is well grounded, yet we ought rather to follow her, when she soberly follows Scripture, than when she hastily follows inconsistent *Augustin.* But we would rather hope, that when she speaks of human depravity in a manner, which *seems* to bear hard upon the preceding quotations, it is either when she speaks of human depravity *in general*; or when she inculcates the *perfection* of humility; or when she opposes the feigned perfection of those, whom she ironically calls “*proud, just, perfect, and holy pharisees.*” *Homily on the Misery of Man.*—From these, and the like words therefore, we have as much reason to conclude, that she renounces true, Christian *holiness*; as to infer, that she decries true, Christian *perfection*. Besides, the delusion of those Pharisees, who have missed a *perfection* of *evangelical righteousness* and *humility*, and have attained a *perfection* of *self-righteousness* and *pride*, is so horrible, and so diametrically opposite to the spirit of Christianity, that our Reformers deserve to be excused, if they have sometimes opposed that error in an unguarded manner; especially as they have so clearly and so frequently asserted the glorious liberty of God’s children.

I shall close this vindication of the Church of England by some remarks upon her “*martyrs,*” whom Mr. *Hill* produces also in his *Creed*, to keep the doctrine of *Christian imperfection* in countenance.

(1) If any of our martyrs, speaking of his converted, renewed, and sanctified state, said, “I am *all sin*,” or words to that purpose, he spoke the words of unguarded humility, rather than the words of evangelical soberness: for a man may have grace and zeal enough to burn for *one truth*, without having time and prudence enough, properly to investigate and state *every truth.*

(2) In

(2) In our state of weakness, the very perfection of humility, may betray an injudicious martyr into the use of expressions, which seem to clash with the glorious liberty of God's children: just as an excessive love for our friends may betray us into an injudicious and teasing officiousness.

(3) When a martyr considers himself in his fallen state in Adam, or in his former state of disobedience, he may say, "*I am all sin,*" in the very same sense in which St. Paul said, *I am the chief of sinners.* But, allow him time to explain himself, and he will soon give you to understand, that he rejoices in the testimony of a good conscience, purged from dead works to serve the living God; and that, far from harbouring any sin in himself, he is determined to strive against sin in others; *resisting unto blood.* And is not such a disposition as this, one of the highest steps in the ladder of Christian perfection?

(4) Hence it appears that the unguarded expressions of our martyrs were levelled at pharisaic pride, or at absolute perfection, and not at Christian perfection. Like some pious Calvinists in our days, they embraced Christian perfection in *deed*, whilst [through misapprehension] they disclaimed it in *word*. And therefore their speeches against the glorious liberty of God's children shew only, that Christian perfection is a perfection of *humility* and *love*, and not a perfection of *wisdom* and *knowledge*.

(5) If it can be proved that any of those, who rank among our martyrs, died full of *indwelling sin*, I will not scruple to say, that he died a *bigot*, and not a *martyr*: for, to die full of *indwelling sin* is to die full of secret obstinacy and uncharitableness, and St. Paul declares, that, were an Apostle himself to give his body to be burned in such a disposition, *it would profit him nothing.*

(6) As many brave Englishmen have laid down their lives in the field of battle, to defend their country against the French, without being properly acquainted with the liberties and boundaries of the

British

British empire : so many Protestants have laid down their lives in *Smithfield*, to defend their religion against the Papists, without being acquainted with all the land-marks, which divide the land of spiritual *Israel* from that of the *Philistines*, and *perfect Christianity* from *Antinomian dotage*.

(7) The Jews can produce their martyrs as well as the Protestants. The *Maccabees*, for example, died entirely satisfied with the *Mosaic covenant*, and strangers to the transcendent glory of the *Christian dispensation*. But is this a sufficient reason for preferring *Judaism* to *Christianity*?—Yes, if Mr. *Hill* is in the right, when he decries the doctrine of *perfect faith* and *perfect love*, and imposes upon us the doctrine of a *death-purgatory*, because some good men formerly died without having clear views of the doctrine of *Christian perfection*; though like men that eat honey in the dark, they tasted its sweetness, and delightfully experienced its power.

(8) To conclude : I am persuaded, that, were all our reformers and martyrs alive, none of them would object to this argument, which sums up the doctrine of the Church of England with respect to *purgatory*. If death cleanses us from indwelling-sin, it is not Christ's blood applied by the Spirit through faith.—But *The only purgatory wherein we [Christian men] trust to be saved, is the death and blood of Christ, which, if we apprehend with a true and steadfast faith, it purgeth and cleanseth us from all our sins. The blood of Christ, says St. John, hath cleansed us from all sin. Hom. on Prayer, Part. III.*—Therefore, the doctrine that *death, &c. cleanseth us from indwelling-sin*; or the doctrine of a *death-purgatory*, is as contrary to the doctrine of our Church, as to that of St. John.

SECTION

SECTION V.

Mr. Hill intimates that the Apostles were Imperfectionists.—St. Peter and St. James, far from pleading for a Death-purgatory, stand up for Christian perfection.

WHEN Mr. Hill has so unadvisedly brought the Church of England against us, it is not surprising to see him press four Apostles “Peter, Paul, James and John,” into the field to “cut up,” (as he calls it) “root and branch, my favourite doctrine of perfection.” Never were these holy men set upon a more unholy piece of work. Methinks I hear them say, Let Mr. Hill rank us with the Gibeonites: let him make us *hewers of wood* to the congregation for ever; but let him not set us upon cutting up root and branch the lovely and fruitful tree of *Christian perfection*.—Happily for that rare tree, Mr. Hill produces only the name of the apostolic woodmen, while we produce their axe, and show that they lay it at the root of *Antinomianism*:—a deadly tree this, which is to our favourite tree, what the fatal tree in Paradise was to the tree of life. Mr. Hill appeals first to *Peter*: let then *Peter* first answer for himself.

I. Where does that Apostle plead for Christian imperfection, and a death-purgatory? Is it where he says, As he, who has called you, is holy; so be ye holy in all manner of conversation:—Seeing you have purified your souls, &c. love one another with a pure heart fervently:—Christ—left us an example, that ye should follow his steps: who did no sin—who bare our sins, that we, being dead to sin, should live to righteousness: forasmuch then as Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves with the same mind: for he that has suffered in the flesh, hath ceased from sin.—The God of all grace, &c. after that ye have suffered awhile make you perfect? Had Peter been against our doctrine, is it probable that he would thus have

have excited believers to attain perfection; wishing it them as we wish our flocks *the peace of God which passes all understanding.*

If that Apostle pleads not for the necessary indwelling of sin in his first epistle, doth he do it in the second? Is it where he says, that *Exceeding great and precious promises are given us, that by these we might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the pollution that is in the world through lust?* Is there indwelling sin in the *Divine Nature?* And can those people, whose heart is still full of sin and indwelling-corruption, be said to have escaped the pollution that is in the world through lust? Might not a man whose lungs are still full of dangerous ulcers, be said with as much propriety to have escaped the misery that is in the world through consumptions?—Is it where St. Peter describes Christian perfection, and exhorts believers to attain it, or to rise higher in it, by adding with *all diligence, to faith, virtue—to virtue, knowledge—temperance—patience—godliness—brotherly kindness—and charity, the key of the arch, and the bond of perfection?*—Is it where he states the difference between fallen believers, weak believers, and perfect Christians; hinting, that the first lack these things, i. e. Christian graces: that *these things are in the second:*—and that they abound in the third? Or is it where he bids us be diligent, that we may be found of God without spot and blameless? For my part, I do not see here the shadow of a plea for the root of every evil in the heart of believers till they die, any more than for the fruit of adultery, murder, and incest in their life till they go hence.

But what principally strikes us in Mr. Hill's appeal to St. Peter is, that although Peter was naturally led by his subject to speak of the necessary indwelling of sin in our heart during the term of life, if that doctrine had been true; yet he does not so much as drop a hint about it. The design of his first epistle is undoubtedly to confirm believers, under

under the fiery trials which their faith meets with. You are kept, says he, by the power of God, through [obedient] faith unto salvation, wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season (if need be) ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations. What a fair opportunity had Peter to say here, without an if need be ' You must be in heaviness, not only through manifold temptations, but also through the remaining corruptions of your hearts: the Canaanites, and the wild beasts must still dwell in the land, to be goads in your sides and thorns in your eyes, or you would grow proud and careless: your heart-leprosy must cleave to you, as Gehazi's leprosy cleaved to him. Death radically cured him, and nothing but death can radically cure you. Till then your heads must remain full of imputed righteousness, and your hearts full of indwelling sin.' But happily for the honour of Christianity, this Antinomian, this impure gospel has not the least countenance from St. Peter; and he cuts up the very root of it where he says: Who shall harm you, if you be followers of that which is good?—Commit the keeping of your souls unto God in well-doing. [The very reverse of sinning.]—You are his daughters [the daughters of him to whom God said, Walk before me and be thou perfect,] so long as ye do well, and are not afraid with any amazement, i. e. so long as your conduct and tempers become the gospel. And every body knows, that a man's tempers are always as his heart; and that, if his heart is full of evil, his tempers cannot be full of goodness, Rom. xv. 14.

II. If St. Peter, the first of Mr. Hill's witnesses, does not say one word to countenance Antinomianism, and to recommend Christian imperfection; let us see if St. James pleads for Baal in the heart, any more than for Baal in the life of perfect believers. Turn to his epistle, O ye that thirst after holiness, to your comfort you will find, that in the first chapter he shews himself a bold assertor of Christian perfection. Let patience, says he, have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect, and entire, wanting

wanting nothing.—He speaks the same language in other places. *Who so looketh into the perfect law of liberty and continueth therein, he, being a doer of the work, shall be blessed in his deed.* And again:—*If any man offendeth not in word, the same is a perfect man.* Nor is it difficult to demonstrate from his second chapter, that established believers, or perfect Christians, *keep the royal, perfect law of liberty;* and that those who break it in one point are in a deplorable case.

If Mr. Wesley has written an epistle to Antinomian believers, to make them go on to Christian perfection, could he have expressed himself in a stronger manner than St. James does in the following passages? “ Grudge not one against another, brethren, lest ye be condemned [or damned,] James v. 9. Speak not evil one of another, brethren. He that judgeth his brother judgeth the law. But if thou judge the law, thou art not a doer of the law, but a judge. There is one law-giver, who is able to save and to destroy [those believers, who keep or break his royal law,] James iv. 11, 12.—Again: If ye fulfil the royal law, according to the Scripture, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself, ye do well: but [if ye do not fulfil it;] if ye have respect to persons, ye commit sin. For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend [i. e. commit sin] in one point he is guilty of all, &c. So speak ye, and so do, as they that shall be judged by the law of liberty,” James ii. 8, &c.

What follows demonstrates, that fallen believers, if they do not *repent* and rise to the state of Christian perfection will be condemned for one sin. St. James properly instances in the sin of *uncharitableness*, because it is directly contrary to our Lord’s new commandment of loving one another as he has loved us, and because *charity is the fulfilling of the royal law, and the bond of perfection.* Can faith save him the

(the uncharitable believer, says St. James?) “ If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food, and one of you [believers] say, Be ye warmed and filled, notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body, what doth it profit? Even so, faith if it hath not works (and of consequence, the fallen believer, if he has sin unrepented of) is dead.”—Such a one is of the devil, for he committeth sin, and sin is the transgression of the law of liberty, by which he shall be judged; yea, by which he shall have judgment without mercy, that has (thus) shewed no mercy; whether he sinned negatively by not relieving his poor brother in deed, though he gave him good words: or whether he did it positively, by having respect to persons, or by grudging against his brother. Compare James ii. 13, &c. with John iii. 3, &c. to the end of both chapters, which are two strong batteries raised on purpose to defend the doctrine of Christian perfection, and to demolish the doctrine of Christian imperfection, which is all one with Antinomianism.

Should it be objected, that, “ at this rate, no Christian believer is safe, till he has attained Christian perfection;” We reply, that all Christian believers are safe, who either stand in it, or press after it. And if they do neither, we are ready to prove, that they rank among fallen believers, and are in as imminent a danger of being spued out of Christ’s mouth as the Laodiceans were. Let Mr. Hill candidly read the Epistle to the Hebrews, the second Epistle of St. Peter, and the first of St. John, and let him doubt of it if he can.

Should Mr. Hill object, that “ St. James himself says, In many things we offend all; and that this one saying abundantly proves that he was a strong Imperfectionist:” I beg leave to involve my honoured opponent in the following dilemma. Are the offences, of which St. James speaks, involuntary? or are they voluntary? If Mr. Hill says, They are

involuntary, I answer, Then they are not proper breaches of the law of liberty, which St. James preached; because the law curses us for no *involuntary* offences; and therefore, such offences [like St. Paul's reproving of the High Priest more sharply than he would have done, had he known what high dignity his unjust judge was invested with such offences,] I say, are not *fins* according to the royal and evangelical law of our Melchisedec; and therefore they do not prove, that all believers remain full of *indwelling-fin* till death.—If Mr. Hill replies that, “The many offences, of which St. James speaks, are *voluntary* offences, and therefore real breaches of the law of liberty; I answer, that this genuine sense of the words taken in connexion with the context, confirms our doctrine of Christian perfection and our opposition to Antinomianism; and I prove it thus:

The text and context run thus: *My brethren, be not many masters*: [i. e. lord it not one over another:] knowing that we [who do so] shall receive the greater condemnation (or damnation) if we do not learn humility. I say *we*, because I would not have you think that God our judge is a respecter of persons, and will spare an Apostle, who breaks the law of liberty and does not repent, any more than he would spare you. For if I represented God as a partial judge, Judas's greater condemnation would prove me mistaken. And I insist the more upon this awful doctrine, because in many things we offend all, especially in word, till we are made perfect in love, in that love which is the fulfilling of the law, and enables us to keep our tongue as it were with a bridle all the day long.—If Mr. Hill asks, by what means I can shew, that this is really St. James's meaning: I reply; by the plain rule of Divinity and Criticism, which bids us take the beginning of a verse in connexion with the end. And if we do this here, we find the doctrine of Christian perfection in this very text, thus: *We shall receive*

ceive the greater damnation if we do not repent and cease to be many masters: for in many things we [from time to time] offend all, [especially by our words till we are perfected in love.] If any man offend not in word, the same is [what each of us should be] a perfect man, and able also to bridle his whole body; James iii. 1, 2.—So certain therefore, as there are men able to bridle their tongue, and their whole body, there are men perfect in the body—perfect before death, according to the doctrine contained in the controverted passages of St. James.

“ But St. James says also, *The spirit that dwelleth in us lusteth to envy*, James. iv. 5.”

I reply: (1) It is usual for modest teachers to rank themselves with the persons, of whom they say something disagreeable: and this they do to take away the harshness of their doctrine, and to make way for the severity of their charges. Thus Peter writes, *The time past of our life may suffice us, to have wrought the will of the Gentiles, when we walked in lasciviousness, lusts, excess of wine, revellings, banquetings, and abominable idolatries:* though it is evident that Peter, a poor, industrious, godly Jew, never walked in abominable idolatries, working the will of the Gentiles. Now the same delicacy of charity, which made St. Peter rank himself with heathens, who walked in drunkenness, whoredom, and gross idolatry, makes St. James rank himself with the carnal Christians, who are possessed by an envious spirit.

(2) Nay, St. James himself using the same figure of speech, says, *The tongue is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison, &c. therewith curse we men, who are made after the similitude of God.* But would it be reasonable to infer from these words, that his tongue was still full of deadly poison, and that he therewith continued to curse his neighbour? Therefore all that is implied in his words about envy, is, that till we are made perfect in the charity which

envieth not, and is not puffed up, the spirit that is in us lusteth to envy and pride. And that we, who have not yet attained Christian perfection, need not be always envious and proud, is evident from the very next words, But he giveth more grace, wherefore he says, God resisteth the proud [envious man] but giveth grace to the humble;—Resist the devil and he will flee from you:—purify your hearts, ye double minded: Be afflicted, and mourn and weep: let your laughter be turned to mourning, and your joy to heaviness: so severe was St. James to those adulterers and adulresses, those genteel believers, who stopped short of Christian perfection, loved the world, and envied one another! Therefore, to press him into the service of solifidianism, is as rash an attempt, as to call his Epistle an Epistle of straw, worthy of being committed to the flames: and (if the preceding remarks are just) Mr. Hill is as much mistaken, when he appeals to St. James, as when he quotes St. Peter, in defence of Christian imperfection.

S E C T I O N VI.

St. Paul preached Christian perfection, and professed to have attained it.—A View of the different Sorts of Perfection which belong to the different Dispensations of Grace and Glory.—How St. Paul could profess a Christian perfection of Faith and Love, and yet assert that he had not yet attained his Perfection of Sufferings: much less his Perfection of Knowledge and glory.—The holy Child Jesus's Imperfection in Knowledge and Sufferings, and his growing in Wisdom and Stature, and in Favour with God and Man, were entirely consistent with his Perfection of humble Love.

ST. Paul's name appears upon Mr. Hill's list of witnesses against Christian perfection; but it is without the Apostle's consent; for Peter and James

James did not plead more strenuously for the glorious liberty of God's children than St. Paul. Nay he professed to have attained it, and addressed Fathers in Christ as persons that were partakers of it together with himself. " We speak wisdom, says he, among them that are perfect, 1 Cor. ii. 6." —" Let us, as many as be perfect be thus minded, Phil. iii. 15."

Nor did Paul fancy that Christian perfection was to be confined to the apostolic order; for he wanted all believers to be like him in this respect. Hence it is, that he exhorted the Corinthians to *perfect holiness in the fear of God*, 2 Cor. vii. 1. to be perfect, 2 Cor. xiii. 11. to be perfectly joined together in the same mind, 1 Cor. i. 10; and shewed them the perfect, or more excellent way, 1 Cor. xiii. —He told the Ephesians, that God gave *pastors for the perfecting of the saints*, —till all come in the unity of the faith, —unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ ; Eph. iv. 13, 14.—He taught every man, &c. that he might present every man perfect in Christ Jesus, Col. i. 28.—He wanted the Colossians fully to put on charity which is the bond of perfection, —that they might stand perfect and complete in all the will of God, Col. iii. 14. iv. 12. He would have the man of God to be perfect, thoroughly furnished to every good work, 2 Tim. iii. 17.—He excited his converts whether they did eat, drink, or do any thing else, to do all to the glory of God, and in the name of the Lord Jesus ; rejoicing evermore, praying without ceasing, and in every thing giving thanks : that is, he excited them to walk according to the strictest rules of Christian perfection.—He blamed the Hebrews for being still such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat ; observing that strong meat, *εστι τελειων*, belongeth to them that are perfect, even to them who by reason of use [or experience] have their [spiritual] fenses exercised to discern both good and evil, Heb. v. 12, &c. He begins the next chapter by exhorting them to go on unto perfection : intimating, that, if

they do not, they may insensibly fall away, *put the Son of God to open shame, and not be renewed again to repentance.* And he concludes the whole epistle by a pathetic wish, that *the God of peace would make them perfect in every good work to do his will.* Hence it appears, that it would not be less unreasonable to set St. Paul upon *crucifying Christ afresh*, than to make him attack Christ's well-known doctrine, *Be ye [morally] perfect [according to your narrow capacity and bounded power] even as your heavenly Father is [morally] perfect [in his infinite nature, and boundless Godhead.]* Mat. v. 48.

Mr. Hill will probably attempt to set all these Scriptures aside, by saying, that nothing can be more absurd, than to represent Paul as a Perfectionist, because he says himself, *Not as though I had already attained, or were already perfect,* Phil. iii. 12. But, some remarks upon the different sorts of perfection, and upon the peculiar perfection, which the Apostle said he had not yet attained, will easily solve this difficulty.

Mr. Hill is too well acquainted with divinity, not to know that absolute perfection belongs to God alone, and that Christ himself, with respect to his humanity, fell and still falls short of infinite perfection. Omniscience, and a wisdom admitting of no growth, are essential to absolute perfection: but the man Christ was not omniscient; for he *did not know the day of judgment:* nor was his wisdom infinite, for *he grew in wisdom.* Nay, his happiness is not yet absolute, for it daily increases as he sees his seed, and is more and more satisfied. God alone is supremely perfect: all beings are imperfect, when they are compared to him: and though all his works were perfect in their places, yet, as he gave them different degrees of perfection, they which have inferior degrees of goodness, may be said to be imperfect in comparison of them, which are endued with superior degrees of excellence.

Thus

Thus archangels are perfect as archangels, but imperfect in comparison of Jesus Christ. Angels are perfect as angels, but imperfect in comparison of archangels. Enoch, Elijah, and the saints who arose with our Lord, are perfect as glorified saints; and, in comparison of them, the departed *spirits of just men made perfect* continue in a state of imperfection: for the risen saints are glorified in body and soul, but the mouldered bodies of departed saints, not having yet felt *the power of Christ's resurrection*, are still under the power of corruption. Imperfect as St. Paul and St. John are now, in comparison of Enoch, Elijah, and the twenty-four elders so often mentioned by St. John; yet they are far more perfect than when they were pressed down by a corruptible body, under which they *groaned being burdened*: for the disembodied spirits of *just men made perfect* are more perfect than the most perfect Christians, who are yet in a *body dead because of sin*.—And, as among rich men, some are richer than others: or among tall men, some are taller than others; so among perfect Christians, some are more perfect than others.

According to the gradation, which belongs to all the works of God: and according to the doctrine of the dispensations of divine grace; the least perfect of all perfect Christians, is more perfect than the most perfect Jew; yea, than John the Baptist, whose dispensation linked together Judaism and Christianity. Or, to speak the language of our Lord, *He that is least in the [Christian] kingdom of God, is greater than John*; though John himself was *the greatest born of a woman* under any preceding dispensation.—By the same rule, he that is perfect under the Jewish dispensation, is more perfect than he that is only perfect according to the dispensation of the Gentiles.

The standard of these different perfections is fixed in the Scriptures. To *fear God and work righteousness*, i. e. to do to others as we would be done

done by, from the principle of God's fear, is the standard of a Gentile's perfection. The standard of a Jew's perfection with respect to morality may be seen in Deut. xxvii. 14—26, and in Ps. xv. And, with respect to devotion, it is fixed in Ps. cxix. The whole of this *perfection* is thus summed up by Micah: "O Israel, what does the Lord thy God require of thee, but to do justice, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God."

The perfection of infant-christianity, which is called in the Scriptures, *the baptism of John*, is thus described by John and by Christ:—"He that hath two coats, let him impart to him that hath none, &c. If thou wilt be perfect, sell what thou hast, give to the poor, and follow me.—If any man come to me and hate not [i. e. is not willing for my sake to leave] his father and mother, his wife and children, his brothers and sisters, yea and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple. And whosoever does not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple."

With respect to adult, perfect Christianity, which is consequent upon the baptism of the Holy Ghost administered by Christ himself, its perfection is described in the Sermon upon the Mount, in 1 Cor. xiii. and in all those parts of the Epistles, where the Apostles exhort believers to walk agreeably to *the glorious liberty of God's Children.*

The perfection of disembodied spirits is thus described by *a voice from heaven*:—"Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord: even so, saith the Spirit, for they rest from their labours, [not from their sins; this they did before death:] and their works follow them."—And the complete perfection of glorified saints is thus described by St. John and St. Paul.—"They shall live and reign with Christ in a city wherein there is no temple, for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it, and the city hath no need of the sun to shine in it, for the glory of God enlightens it, and the Lamb

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is the light thereof.—And there shall be no curse: but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it, and his servants shall serve him, and they shall see his face; and his name shall be on their foreheads, and they shall reign for ever and ever in glorified bodies.—For this corruptible body shall put on incorruption, and this mortal shall put on immortality.—It is sown in dishonour, it is raised in glory: it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power: it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body: as is the heavenly Adam, such are they also that are heavenly: and as we have borne the image of the earthly we shall also bear the image of the heavenly: for flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God:” but the spiritual, i. e. the glorified body shall inherit the heavenly Canaan.

Persons, whose orthodoxy consists in obstinately refusing to peep over the wall of prejudice; and who think it is a crime to read the Scriptures without borrowing green spectacles, will probably say, that these observations upon the different sorts and degrees of perfection, are “novel chimeras;” and that I multiply perfections as I do justifications: “inventing them by the dozen.” To this I answer, that we advance nothing but what, we hope, recommends itself to the candor of those who have a regard for *reason* and *revelation*.

(1) Reason tells us, that all God’s works are perfect in their places; and that some having a higher place than others upon the scale of beings, they are of consequence more perfect. If Mr. Hill will not believe it, we appeal to his *banker*, and ask, if there is not an essential difference between the metallic perfection of brass, that of silver, and that of gold?—We appeal to his *jeweller*, and ask if the perfection of an agate is not inferior to that of an emerald—the perfection of a ruby, to that of a diamond; and if some diamonds cannot be said to be

be more perfect than others?—We appeal to his *gardener*, and ask if a blackberry, is not inferior to a *strawberry*, a *strawberry* to a *nectarine*, and a *nectarine* to a *pine-apple*; and if nevertheless those various fruits have not each their perfection?—Nay, we will venture to ask his *under-gardener*, if the perfection of the fruit does not imply the perfection of the blossom; if the perfection of the blossom does not presuppose that of the bud; and if a bud, whose perfection is destroyed by the frost in March, is likely to produce perfect blossoms in May, and perfect fruit in October?

Should the fear of becoming a Perfectionist, make Mr. *Hill* refuse his assent to these obvious truths: we will address him as a master of arts, a gentleman, who is versed in Natural Philosophy, as well as in Calvinism. Is it absurd to say, that some just men rise progressively from the perfection of a lover, to the perfection of a higher dispensation in the spiritual world; do we not see a similar promotion, even among the basest classes of animals in the natural world? Consider that beautiful *insect*, which exults to display its crown, and to expand its wings in the sun. Will you say that it is not a *perfect butterfly*? Nevertheless three weeks ago it was a *perfect aurelia*, quietly sleeping in its silken tomb. Some months before, it was a *perfect silk-worm*, busily preparing itself for another state of existence, by spinning and weaving its shroud. And had you seen it a year ago, you would have seen nothing but a *perfect egg*. Thus in one year it has experienced three grand changes, which may be called *metamorphoses*, *births*, or *conversions*. Each change was perfect in its kind; and nevertheless, the last is as far superior to the first, as a beautiful, flying butterfly exceeds a black, crawling worm; and such a worm, the invisible seed of life, that lies dormant in the diminutive egg of an *insect*.

(2) Scripture and experience do not support our doctrine of the difference of perfections, less than Reason and Philosophy. We read, Gen. vi. 9, that *Noah was a just man, and perfect in his generation.* We read also, Job i. 1, that *There was a man in the land of Uz, whose name was Job, and that man was perfect.* Now whatever the perfection of Noah and Job consisted in, it is evident that it was not *Jewish perfection*: for the perfection of *Judaism* requires the sacrament of circumcision, and Mr. Hill will hardly say, that men were circumcised in the land of *Uz*, and before the flood. Hence I conclude that Noah and Job had attained the perfection of *Gentilism*, and not that of *Judaism*.

Again: *Mark the perfect man*, says David, *for his end is peace.* No doubt he spake this of the perfect Jew; and such were, I think, Moses, Samuel, and Daniel: if Mr. Hill will not allow it, I produce Simeon and Anna, or Zacharias and Elizabeth, who were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of God blameless, Luke i. 16. Now these excellent Jews were not perfect according to the dispensation of John the Baptist; for water-baptism was not less essential to a perfect disciple of John, than circumcision was to a perfect disciple of Moses, and they, or some of them, probably died long before John opened his dispensation by *preaching the baptism of repentance*.

Once more: John the Baptist was undoubtedly perfect according to his own dispensation; his penitential severity, his great reputation for holiness, and the high encomium which our Lord passed upon him, naturally lead us to conclude it. But that he was not a perfect Christian is evident from the following considerations: (1) Our Lord said, that *the least in the [Christian] kingdom of God, should be greater than John.*—(2) John himself confessed the imperfection of his baptism, or dispensation, in comparison of the perfection of Christ's baptism and

and spiritual dispensation. *I have need to be baptized of thee*, said he to Christ, *and comest thou to me?* And to his disciples he said, *I indeed baptize you with water, but he [the Lamb of God] shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire.*—(3) John was beheaded before Christ was crucified: and the out-pouring of the Spirit, the baptism of the Holy Ghost, did not begin till after Christ's ascension: the Apostle St. John having particularly mentioned, that the *Holy Ghost was not yet given*, or that the full dispensation of the Spirit was not yet opened, because Jesus was not yet glorified, John vii. 39: an important observation this, which is confirmed by Christ's own words to his disciples, John xvi. 7. *I tell you the truth; it is expedient for you that I go away; for if I go not away the Comforter will not come unto you: [the full dispensation of the Holy Ghost shall not be opened:] but if I depart, I will send him to you.* Agreeably to this, he commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father [i. e. the promised Spirit] which, says he, *Ye have heard of me: for John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence.* And when they had been thus baptized, they began to preach the full baptism of Christ, which has two branches, the baptism of water, and the baptism of the Spirit, or of celestial fire. Therefore, when the penitent Jews asked, *Men and brethren what shall we do?* Peter answered, *Be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost; for the promise of it is unto you, and unto your children, and to all that are afar off; even as many as the Lord our God shall call to the perfection of the Christian dispensation:*—*And we are witnesses of these things; and so is also the Holy Ghost, whom God [since the day of Pentecost] hath given to them that obey him, i. e. to obedient believers.* Compare Acts ii. 38, and v. 32, with John vii. 39.

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From the preceding reasons we conclude, that the case of John the Baptist was as singular as that of Moses. Moses knew Joshua, and pointed him out, as the man who was to lead the Israelites into the Land of Promise: but Moses died before Joshua, opened the way. Thus Moses saw the good land: he was not far from the typical kingdom of God; but he did not enter into it. In like manner the Baptist knew Christ, and pointed him out as the wonderful person, who was to introduce believers into the spiritual kingdom of God. But John was beheaded before Christ glorified opened his peculiar kingdom. Thus John saw the kingdom of heaven: he was not far from it. But yet he did not enter into it. He died a just man made perfect according to his own incomplete dispensation, but not according to the dispensation of Christ and his Spirit. This was the Baptist's grief, not his guilt: for he earnestly desired to be baptized of Christ with the Holy Ghost; but the Holy Ghost was not yet given in the Christian measure. The gift of the Spirit was rather distilled as a dew, than poured out as a shower; because Jesus was not yet glorified: but now, that he is ascended upon high to receive that unspeakable gift for men in its fulness;—now that the promise of the Father is fulfilled to all who plead it aright; we are culpable, if we rest satisfied with the inferior manifestations of the Spirit, which belong to the baptism of John, or to Infant-christianity; and we act in an unchristian like manner, if we ridicule the kingdom of the Holy Ghost, and speak evil of perfect Christianity.

To return: a perfect Gentile sees God in his works and providences; but, wanting a more particular manifestation of his existence and goodness, he sighs, *Oh where shall I find him?*—A perfect Jew ardently expects his coming as Messiah, and Emanuel, or *God with us*; and he groans, *O that thou wouldest rend the heavens and come down!*—A perfect disciple of John believes, that the Mef-

siah is come in the flesh, and prays, *O Lamb of God, that takest away the sins of the world, restore the kingdom to a waiting Israelite: baptize me with the Holy Ghost: fill me with the Spirit.*—And perfect Christians can witness from blessed experience, that he, who was manifest in the flesh, is come in the Spirit's power to establish within them his gracious kingdom of righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.

In this blessed kingdom St. Paul lived, when he said, *Let us, as many as are perfect be thus minded.* Nevertheless, though he was not only a perfect Christian, but also able to preach wisdom among them that were perfect, he justly acknowledges himself imperfect in knowledge, in comparison of perfectly-glorified saints. *We know but in part, says he, but when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away: for now we see through a glass darkly, but when we shall drop these dark veils of flesh and blood, and be clothed with celestial, incorruptible bodies, we shall be capable of beholding God without dying: and then we shall see him face to face,* 1 Cor. xiii. 9, &c. For though we are now the sons of God, it does not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that when he shall appear, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is, 1 John iii. 2.

It is of this final perfecting of the saints in the day of the resurrection, that the Apostle writes to the Hebrews, where he says: *These all having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise which relates to the full perfection of the just; God having provided some better thing for us [Christians] that they [the Jewish saints] without us should not be made perfect, [i. e. that we should all be perfected in glory together.]—For we shall all be changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump, [for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible] and we, who shall have died, or shall then be found living in a state of*

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initial perfection, shall be changed, Heb. xi. 99,
1 Cor. xv. 51.

Nor does it follow from thence, that all glorified saints shall be equally perfect. I cannot but embrace here the reasonable sentiment of Dr. Watts. "The worship of heaven, (says that judicious divine) and the joy that attends it, may be exceedingly different in degrees, according to the different capacity of spirits; and yet all may be perfect, and free from sinful defects. Does not the sparrow praise its Maker upon the ridge of a cottage, chirping in its native perfection? And yet the lark advances, in her flight and song, as far above the sparrow, as the clouds are above the house-top. Surely superior joys and glories must belong to superior powers and services.—The word *perfection* does not always imply *equality*. If all the souls in heaven were of one mould, and make, and inclination: yet there may be different sizes of capacity even in the same genius, and a different degree of preparation for the same delights; therefore though all the spirits of the just were uniform in their natures and pleasures, and all perfect; yet one spirit may possess more happiness and glory than another, because it is more capacious of intellectual blessings, and better prepared for them. So when vessels of various size are thrown into the same ocean, there will be a great difference in the quantity of the liquid which they receive; though all might be full to the brim, and all made of the richest metal."

Watts on the Happiness of separate Spirits.

Happiness thus proved both by Reason and Scripture, that there are various sorts and degrees of perfection: and that a man may be *perfect* according to the dispensation of divine grace he is under upon earth, though he is not yet perfect according to the dispensation of divine glory, which will take place, when our mortal bodies shall know the power of Christ's resurrection: having proved this, I say, nothing is easier than to reconcile St. Paul

with himself, when he speaks in the same chapter of his *being perfect*, and of his *not being yet perfect*. For when he says, *Let us, as many as are perfect, be thus minded*, he speaks of Christian perfection, that is, of the maturity of grace and holiness, which men still burdened with corruptible flesh and blood arrive at under the full dispensation of the gospel of Christ. But when he says, *Not as though I had already attained, or were already perfect, &c.* he speaks of his perfection as a candidate for a *crown of martyrdom* on earth, and for a *crown of glory* in heaven. Just as if he had said, Though I am dead to sin, and perfected in love:—though I live not, but Christ liveth in me; yet I am not satisfied with my present perfection; I want to be perfected like Christ. *Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and [then] to enter into his glory?* Luke xxiv. 26. I want, in short, to be perfected in suffering, as well as in love. I cannot, I will not rest, till I end my race of pain and shame, and know the fellowship of Christ's sufferings on the ignominious tree. I am filled with a noble ambition of dying a martyr for him; being persuaded that this perfection of sufferings will ripen me for my heavenly perfection—the perfection to which I shall be raised at the resurrection of the just.

That this was the Apostle's meaning when he denied his *being already made perfect*, will, I hope, appear indubitable to those who consider the context. The words which immediately precede St. Paul's observation, that *he had not yet attained*, express a pathetic wish of sharing both in Christ's exaltation, by a glorious resurrection, and in his humiliation by perfect sufferings. *That I may know him*, says he, *and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings; being made conformable unto his painful, ignominious death, if by any means I may attain to the resurrection of the dead, which is the full perfection of the human nature;* and secure a part in the first resurrection of the just,

in which martyrs will be peculiarly interested: witness this plain Scripture; *I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, &c. and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years; but the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy is he that has part in the first resurrection,* Rev. xx. 4, &c.

But, I repeat it, although St. Paul disclaimed his having yet attained a perfection of *shame and glory*, he nevertheless professed his having attained a perfection of Christian faith working by love. This is evident from the words that follow the controverted text: *This one thing I do, &c. I press towards the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus [which is my complete glorification in heaven.] Let us therefore as many as are perfect [in faith and love] be thus minded.—Let us press after our perfection of suffering here, and of glory hereafter:—a bodily perfection this, which the Apostle describes thus at the end of the chapter: We look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working, whereby he is able to subdue all things unto himself,* Phil. iii. 21. Hence it appears, if we are not strangely mistaken, that it is not less absurd to oppose our doctrine of *Christian perfection* from Phil. iii. than to oppose the divinity of Christ from the first chapter of St. John's Gospel.

I shall conclude these remarks upon the various sorts of perfection, by an observation, which may help Mr. Hill to understand how St. Paul could be *perfect in love*, when he professed that he was not perfect either in *glory, knowledge, or sufferings*.

Had not our Lord been *perfect in love* from a child, he would have broken the two great commandments on which hang all the law and the prophets. But in him was no sin: therefore he was

perfect in love, though his love admitted of an increase, as well as his wisdom and knowledge; just as a perfect bud admits of a growth into a perfect blossom, and, such a blossom into a perfect fruit. Hence it is, that, as our Lord's perfect love grew, *he increased in favour with God and man*; an additional degree of approbation being due to him from all rationals, upon every display of his growing perfection, Luke i. 52. But, though our Lord was always *perfect in love*, yet, it is certain that he was not always *perfect in sufferings*, much less in glory: for he was not perfected in sufferings, till after he had expired between the two thieves: nor was he perfected in glory, before he took his place at the right-hand of God. This is evidently the Apostle's doctrine, where he says, *It became him by whom are all things, to make the Captain of our salvation perfect through sufferings*, Heb. ii. 10. And again, chap. v. 8. *Though he was a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered: and being made perfect [in sufferings and in glory] he became the author of eternal salvation to all them that obey him.* Mr. Hill must then allow, that St. Paul's *imperfection*, with respect to *sufferings and glory*, was no obstacle to the *perfection* of his *love*; or he must assert, that Christ was *sinfully imperfect in love*, so long as he continued imperfect in *sufferings and glory*: a supposition this, which is too horrible to be admitted by a merely nominal Christian, much more by Mr. Hill.

SECTION

SECTION VII.

St. Paul was not lustful, carnal, and sold under sin.—The true Meaning of Gal. v. 17, and of Rom. vii. 14, &c. is opened consistently with the Context, the Design of the Epistles to the Galatians and to the Romans, and the Privileges of the Christians, and the Doctrine of Perfection.

IT is easier to raise dust than to answer an argument. I expect therefore, that our opponents, instead of solidly answering the contents of the preceding section, will assert that St. Paul was an avowed enemy to deliverance from lust and evil tempers before death, and of consequence a strong opposer of the doctrine of Christian perfection. And to support their assertion they will probably quote the following text: *The flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh, so that ye cannot do the things that ye would*, Gal. v. 17. For they conclude from these words, that, so long as we dwell in bodies of corruptible flesh, we cannot help breaking the law of liberty (at least from time to time) by sinful internal lusts. As this objection passes among them for unanswerable, it may not be amiss to give it a four-fold answer.

(1) St. Paul wrote these words to the carnal, fallen Galatians. To them he said, *So that ye cannot do the things that ye would*: and there was a good reason, why they could not do what they had a weak desire to do. They were bewitched by the flesh, and by carnal teachers, who led them from the power of the Spirit to the weakness of the letter; yea, to the letter of Judaism too. But did he not speak of himself to the Philippians in a very different strain? Did he not declare, *I can do all things through Christ, who strengtheneth me*? And cannot every believer who steadily walks in the Spirit say the same thing? Who does not see the

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flaw of this argument? The *disobedient, fallen, bewitched* believers of Galatia, of whom St. Paul stood in doubt, could not but fulfil the lusts of the flesh, when they were led by the flesh. *Neither hot nor cold*, like the Laodiceans, they could neither be perfect Christians nor perfect worldlings, because they fully sided neither with the Spirit nor with the flesh: or to use the Apostle's words, *they could not do the things that they would* through the opposition which the flesh made against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; neither of these principles being yet fully victorious in their halting, distracted hearts. Therefore this must be also the miserable case of all obedient, faithful, established believers through all ages all the world over! What has this Antinomian conclusion to do with the scriptural premises? When I assert that all those who have put out their knees cannot run a race swiftly, do I so much as intimate that no man can be a swift racer?

(2) It is as unscriptural to judge of the power and liberty of established believers, by the power and liberty of the Galatians; as it is unreasonable to judge of the liberty of a free nation, by the servitude of a half-enslaved people; or of the strength of a vigorous child, by the weakness of a half-formed embryo. I found this remark (1) Upon Gal. v. 1, where the Apostle indirectly reproves his Judaizing, wrangling conver's, for being fallen from the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and for being entangled again with the yoke of bondage: and (2) Upon Gal. iv. 19, *My little children of whom I travail in birth again, until Christ be formed in you.* The dawn of day is not more different from the meridian light, than the imperfect state described in this verse, is different from the imperfect state described in the following lines, which are descriptive of the adult Christian; *I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me, and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God,* Gal. ii. 20.

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(3) The sense which is commonly fixed upon the text produced by our opponents, is entirely overthrown by the context: read the preceding verse, and you will find a glorious, though conditional promise of the liberty which we plead for: *This I say, walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the [sinful] lust of the flesh*; that is, far from harbouring either outward or inward sin, ye shall, with myself, and as many as are perfect, steadily keep your body under, and be in every thing spiritually minded, which is *life and peace*.

(4) We should properly distinguish between the lawful and the sinful lusts or desires of the flesh. To desire to eat, to drink, to sleep, to marry, to rest, to shun pain at proper times and in a proper manner, is no sin: such lusts or desires are not contrary to the law of liberty. Our Lord himself properly indulged most of these harmless propensities of the flesh, without ceasing to be the immaculate Lamb of God. Hence it is, that our Church requires us in our baptism, to renounce only "the sinful lusts of the flesh;" giving us a tacit leave lawfully to indulge its *lawful appetites*. I should be glad, for example, to recruit my strength by one hour's sleep, or by an ounce of food; as well by a good night's rest, or a good meal; but the flesh harmlessly lusteth against the Spirit; so that in these, and in a thousand such instances, *I cannot do the things that I would*. But do I commit sin when I use my body according to its nature? Nay, if I were as strongly solicited unlawfully to indulge the lawful appetites of my flesh, as Christ was to turn stones into bread when he felt keen hunger in the wilderness; would not such a temptation increase the glory of my victory, rather than the number of my sins? Is it right in our opponents to avail themselves of the vague, unfixed meaning of the words *flesh* and *lust*, to make the simple believe, that, so long as we have human flesh about us, and bodily lust or appetites within us,

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our hearts must necessarily remain pregnant with sinful lusts, and we shall “have innumerable lusts (as says an Imperfectionist whom I shall soon mention) swarming about our hearts?” Does not this doctrine put a worm at the root of *Christian liberty*, while it nourishes *Antinomian freedom*;—a freedom to sin, even to adultery and murder, without ceasing to be *sinless and perfect in Christ?*

(5) Two lines after St. Paul’s supposed plea for the necessary continuance of indwelling-sin in believers, the Apostle begins a long enumeration of the works of the flesh, of the which, says he, *I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they [the fallen believers] who do such things, or admit in their hearts such lusts, as hatred, variance, strife, or envyings, shall not inherit the kingdom of God*: whereas, *they that are Christ’s [they that are led by the Spirit of God]*, for in St. Paul’s account only such are Christ’s, i. e. properly belong to Christ’s spiritual dispensation. See Rom. viii. 9—
14.] *have crucified the flesh with its affections and lusts,* Gal. v. 24. Now these spiritual believers can do all things through Christ: and accordingly the Apostle observes that far from bearing the fruit of the flesh, they bear the fruit of the Spirit, which is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness, temperance.—The whole cluster of inherent graces which makes up Christian perfection; and then he observes, that *The law is not against such [because they fulfil it:] For all the law is fulfilled in one word. even in this: Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.* See Gal. v. 15

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(6) The sense which the Imperfectionists give to Gal. v. 17, is not only flatly contrary to the rest of the chapter, but to the end and design of all the epistle. What the Apostle has chiefly in view through the whole is to reprove the Galatians for their carnality in following Judaizing teachers, and in bearing the fruits of the flesh, envy, variance,

etc.

ance, &c. insomuch that they were ready to bite and devour one another. Now, if when he had sharply reproved them, as persons who *ended in the flesh*, after having *begun in the Spirit*, he had written Gal. v. 17, in the sense of our opponents; he would fairly have excused these bewitched men, absolutely defeated his reproof, and absurdly furnished them with an excellent plea to continue in their bad course of life. For if they could not *fulfil the law of Christ*, but must remain carnal and fold under indwelling-sin, had they not a right to answer the Apostle thus: if neither we, whom thou callest *bewitched Galatians*, nor any spiritual believer can possibly do the things that we should and would do, because the flesh sinfully and unavoidably lusteth against the Spirit; why dost thou blame us for our carnality? Why dost thou take us to task rather than other believers? Are we not all bound by adamantine chains of carnal necessity to break the law of Christ so long as we are in the body? Art thou not the very man who givest us to understand that we *cannot do what we should and would do*, because the *flesh*, which we cannot possibly part with, before death, *lusteth against the Spirit*? And is not *absolute necessity* the best excuse in the world?

(7) Should Mr. Hill ask: What is then the genuine meaning of Galatians, v. 17? We reply, that when we consider that verse in the light of the context, we do not doubt but the sense of it is fairly expressed in the following lines, ‘The flesh and the Spirit are two contrary principles. *They that are in, or walk after the flesh cannot please God.* And ye are undoubtedly in the flesh, and walk after the flesh, while *ye bite and devour one another.* This I say then, *walk in the Spirit; be led by the Spirit; and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh, as ye now do.* For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and prevails in all carnal people; and the Spirit lusteth against

against the flesh, and prevails in all spiritual people; and these two, far from nesting together, as Antinomian teachers make you believe, are contrary to each other. They are irreconcileable enemies: so that, as obedient, spiritual believers, while they are led by the Spirit, *cannot do what they would do*, if they were led by the flesh; ye bewitched, carnal, disobedient Galatians, who are led by the flesh, *cannot do what they would do*, if ye were led by the Spirit, and what ye have still some desire to do, so far as ye have not yet absolutely quenched the Spirit. Would ye then return to your liberty, return to your duty: change your guide: forsake the carnal mind: let *Christ be formed in you: be led by the Spirit*: so shall ye fulfil the law of Christ; and it shall no more condemn you, than the law of Moses binds you. For if ye be led by the Spirit, ye are not under the curse of the law: ye are equally free from the bondage of the Mosaic law, and from the condemnation of the law of Christ.' Gal. v. 16, 17, 18.

(8) Should Mr. Hill say, "That by the flesh he understands not only the body, but also the natural desires, appetites, and aversions, which are necessarily excited in the soul, in consequence of its intimate union with the body: and that the body of sin must needs live and die with the body which our spirit inhabits; because so long as we continue in the body, we are unavoidably tried by a variety of situations, passions, inclinations, aversions, and infirmities, which burden us, hinder us from doing and suffering all we could wish to do and to suffer, and occasion our doing or feeling what we should be glad in some respects not to do or feel."

I answer: it is excessively wrong to conclude, that all these burdens, infirmities, appetites, passions, and aversions, are those *sinful workings* of our corrupt nature, which are sometimes called *the flesh*.—You cannot continue a whole day in deep prostration

prostration of body and soul, nor perhaps one hour upon your knees: your stomach involuntarily rises at the sight of some food which some persons esteem delicious: your strength fails in outward works: your spirits are exhausted; you faint or sleep, when others are active and toil: you need the spiritual and bodily cordials which others can administer: perhaps also you are afflicted with disagreeable sensations in the outward man, through the natural, necessary play of the various springs which belong to flesh and blood: your just grief vents itself in tears: your zeal for God is attended with a proper anger at sin: nay, misapplying what the Apostle says of the carnal man under the law, you may declare with great truth: the extensive good I would, I do not; and the accidental evil I would not, that I do: I would convert every sinner, relieve every distressed object, and daily visit every sick bed in the kingdom, but I cannot do it. I would never try the patience of my friends, never stir up the envy of my rivals, never excite the malice of my enemies: but I cannot help doing this undesigned evil, as often as I strongly exert myself in the discharge of my duty.

If you say, "All these things, or most of them are quite inconsistent with the perfection you contend for;" I ask: Upon this footing, was not our Lord himself imperfect? Did his bodily strength never fail in agonizing prayer, or intense labour? Did his animal spirits ever move with the same sprightliness? Do we not read of his sleeping in the ship, when his disciples wrestled with a tempestuous sea? Did he not fulfil the precept, *Be ye angry and sin not?* Had he not the troublesome sensations of grief at Lazarus's grave,—of hunger in the wilderness—of weariness at Jacob's well—and of thirst upon the cross? If he was *made in the likeness of sinful flesh, and tempted in all things as we are;* is it not highly probable, that he was not an utter stranger to the other natural appetites, and

uneasy sensations which are incident to flesh and blood? Is it a sin to feel them? Is it not rather a virtue totally to deny them, or not to gratify them out of the line of duty, or not to indulge them in an excessive manner on that line? Again: did not his holy flesh testify a natural, innocent abhorrence to suffering? Did not his sacred body faint in the garden? Were not his spirits so depressed, that he stood in need of the strengthening assistance of an angel? Did he do all the good he would? To suppose that he wished not the conversion of his friends and brethren, is to suppose him totally devoid of natural affection: but were they all converted? Did you never read, *Neither did his brethren believe in him: and his friends went out to lay hold on him: for they said, he is beside himself?* To conclude: did he not accidentally stir up the evil he would not, when he gave occasion to the envy of the Pharisees—the scorn of Herod—the fears of Pilate—the rage of the Jewish mob? And when he prayed, that the bitter cup might pass from him, if it were possible; did he not manifest a resigned desire to escape pain and shame? If every such desire is indwelling-sin, or the flesh sinfully lusting against the Spirit, did he not go through the sinful conflict, as well as those whom we call perfect men in Christ? And consequently did he not fall at once from mediatorial, Adamic, and Christian perfection; indwelling-sin being equally inconsistent with all these perfections?—What true believer does not shudder at the bare supposition? And if our *sinless* Lord felt the *weakness* of the flesh harmlessly lusting against the *willingness* of the Spirit, according to his own doctrine, *The Spirit indeed is willing but the flesh is weak*, is it not evident that the conflict we speak of (if the Spirit maintains its superior, victorious lusting against the flesh, and by that means steadily keeps the flesh in its proper place) is it not evident, I say, that this conflict is no more inconsistent with Christian perfection, than suffering, agonizing,

agonizing, fainting, crying, and dying, which were the lot of our *sinless, perfect* Saviour to the last?

If I am not greatly mistaken, the preceding remarks prove: (1) That when our opponents pretend to demonstrate the *necessary* indwelling of sin in all believers from Gal. v. 17, they wretchedly tear that text from the context, to make it speak a language which St. Paul abhors:—2) That this text, fairly taken together with the context, and the design of the whole epistle, is a proof that obedient, spiritual believers can do what the *bewitched Galatians* could not do: that is, they can *crucify the flesh with all its affections and lusts*, and walk as perfect Christians, who utterly destroy the whole body of sin, and *fulfil the law of Christ*.—And (3) That to produce Gal. v. against the doctrine of Christian perfection, is full as absurd as to quote the Sermon upon the Mount in defence of Antinomian delusions.—I have dwelt so long upon this head, because I have before me * *An Essay on Galatians v. 17*, lately published by an ingenious divine, who takes it for granted, that the Apostle contends in this verse for the *necessary* indwelling of sin.

Mr. Hill will probably say, “That he does not rest the doctrine of Christian imperfection so much upon the experience of the fallen *Galatians*, as upon that of St. Paul himself, who, in Romans vii. frankly acknowledges, that he was still a *wretched, carnal man, sold under sin*, and *serving with the flesh the law of sin*. Whence it follows, that it is high presumption in modern believers to aspire at more perfection, and the greater freedom from sin upon earth, than had been attained by St. Paul, who was *not a whit behind the very chiefeſt apostles, but laboured*

* The arguments by which the doctrine of the necessary indwelling of sin in all believers till death is supported in that *Essay*, will be considered in Sect. XIV.

more abundantly than they all."—To this common objection I answer:

(1) The perfection we preach, is nothing but perfect repentance, perfect faith, and perfect love, productive of the gracious tempers which St. Paul himself describes, 1 Cor. xiii. We see those blessed tempers shining through his epistles, discourses, and conduct; and I have proved in the preceding section, that he himself professed Christian perfection. This objection therefore appears to us an ungenerous attempt to make St. Paul grossly contradict himself.—For what can be more ungenerous, than to take advantage of a figurative mode of expression, to blast a good man's character, and to traduce him as a slave of his fleshly lusts, a drudge to carnality, a wretch sold under sin? What would Mr. Hill think of me, if, under the plausible pretence of magnifying God's grace to the chief of sinners, and of proving that there is no deliverance from sin in this life, I made the following speech?

"The more we grow in grace, the more clearly we see our sins; and the more willingly we acknowledge them to God and men. This is abundantly verified by the confessions that the most holy men have made of their wickedness. Paul himself, holy Paul, is not ashamed to humble himself for the sins which he committed even after his conversion. *I robbed other churches,* says he, *taking wages of them to do you service,* 2 Cor. xi. 8. Hence it appears, that the Apostle had agreed to serve some churches for a proper salary: but, being *carnal, and sold under sin,* he broke his word; he *fleeced,* but refused to feed the flocks; and robbing the churches, he went to the Corinthians, perhaps to see what he could get of them also in the end: for *the heart is desperately wicked, and deceitful above all things,* Jeremiah xvii. 9. Nay, partial as he was to those Corinthians, for whom he turned church-robb^rer, he shewed that his love to them was

was not sinless and free from rage; for once he threatened to come to them with a rod; and he gave one of them to Satan for the destruction of the flesh. With great propriety therefore, did holy Paul say to the last, *I am the chief of sinners.* And now, when the chief of the apostles abases himself thus before God, and publicly testifies, both by his words and works, that there is no deliverance from sin, no perfection in this life, who can help being frightened at the pharisaic pride of the men, who dare inculcate the doctrine of sinless perfection?"

I question if Mr. Hill himself, upon reading this ungenerous and absurd, though in one sense scriptural plea for St. Paul's *imperfection*, would not be as much out of conceit with my fictitious explanation of 2 Cor. xi. as I am with his Calvinistic exposition of Rom. vii. Nor do I think it more criminal to represent the apostle as a church-robbler, than to traduce him as a *wretched, carnal man, sold under sin*:—another Ahab, that is, a man who *did evil in the sight of the Lord, above all that were before him.*

(2) St. Paul no more professes himself actually a carnal man in Rom. vii, than he professes himself actually a liar in Rom. iii. 7, where he says, *But if the truth of God has more abounded through my lie, why am I judged as a sinner?*—He no more professes himself a man *actually sold under sin*, than St. James and his fellow believers profess themselves a generation of vipers, and actual cursers of men, when the one wrote and the others read, *The tongue can no man tame:—it is full of deadly poison;—therewith curse we men.* When St. Paul reproves the partiality of some of the Corinthians to this or that preacher, he introduces Apollos and himself; though it seems that his reproof was chiefly intended for other preachers, who fomented a party-spirit in the corrupted church of Corinth. And then he says, *These things, brethren, I have in a figure transferred to myself and to Apollos, for your sakes;*

fakes ; that ye might learn in us not to think of men above that which is written, 1 Cor. iv. 6.—By the same figure he says of himself, what he might have said of any other man, or of all mankind : *Though I speak with the tongues of men, and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass.* Thrice in three verses he speaks of his not having charity : and suppose he had done it three hundred times, this would no more have proved that he was really uncharitable, than his saying. Rom. vii. *I am sold under sin, proves that he served the law of sin with his body, as a slave is forced to serve the master who bought him.*

(3) It frequently happens also, that by a figure of rhetoric, which is called *Hypotyposis*, writers relate things past or things to come in the present tense ; that their narration may be more lively, and may make a stronger impression. Thus Gen. vi. 17, we read, *Behold, I even I do bring* [i. e. I will bring] *120 years hence] a flood upon the earth to destroy all flesh.*—Thus also, 2 Sam. xxii. 1. 35, 48, *When the Lord had delivered David out of the hand of all his enemies, and given him peace in all his borders, he spake the words of this song.*—*He teacheth* [i. e. he taught] *my hands to war, so that a bow of steel is* [i. e. was] *broken by mine arms :—It is God that avengeth* [i. e. that hath avenged] *me—and that bringeth* [i. e. has brought] *me forth from mine enemies.* A thousand such expressions, or this figure continued through a thousand verses, would never prove, before unprejudiced persons, that King Saul was alive, and that David was not yet delivered for good out of his bloody hands. Now if St. Paul, by a similar figure, which he carries through part of a chapter, relates his past experience in the present tense :—*If the Christian apostle, to humble himself, and to make his description more lively, and the opposition between the bondage of sin and Christian liberty more striking :—If the apostle, I say, with such*

such a design as this, appears upon the stage of instruction in his old Jewish dress, a dress this, in which he could serve God day and night, and yet, like another Ahab, breathe threatenings and slaughter against God's children:—and if in this dress he says, *I am carnal, sold under sin, &c.* is it not ridiculous to measure his growth as an apostle of Christ by the standard of his stature, when he was a Jewish bigot, a fiery zealot, full of good meanings and bad performances?

(4) To take a scripture out of the context, is often like taking the stone that binds an arch out of its place: you know not what to make of it. Nay, you may put it to an use quite contrary to that for which it was intended. This our opponents do, when they so take Rom. vii. out of its connexion with Rom. vi. and Rom. viii. as to make it mean the very reverse of what the apostle designed. St. Paul, in Romans fifth and sixth, and in the beginning of the seventh chapter, describes the glorious liberty of the children of God under the Christian dispensation. And as a skilful painter puts shades in his pictures to heighten the effect of the lights: so the judicious apostle introduces in the latter part of Rom. vii. a lively description of the domineering power of sin, and of the intolerable burden of guilt:—a burden this, which he had so severely felt, when the convincing Spirit charged sin home upon his conscience after he had broken his good resolutions; but especially during the three days of his blindness and fasting at Damascus. Then he groaned, *O wretched man that I am, &c.* hanging night and day between despair and hope, between unbelief and faith, between bondage and freedom, till God brought him into Christian liberty by the ministry of Ananias:—of this liberty the apostle gives us a farther and fuller account in Rom. viii. Therefore the description of the man, who groans under the galling yoke of sin, is brought in merely by contrast, to set off the

amazing

amazing difference there is between the bondage of sin, and the liberty of gospel-holiness: just as the generals, who entered Rome in triumph, used to make a show of the prince whom they had conquered. On such occasions the conqueror rode in a triumphal chariot crowned with laurel: while the captive king followed him on foot, loaded with chains, and making, next to the conqueror, the most striking part of the show. Now, if in a Roman triumph, some of the spectators had taken the *chained king on foot* for the *victorious general in the chariot*, because the one immediately followed the other; they would have been guilty of a mistake not unlike that of our opponents, who take the *carnal Jew, sold under sin*, and *groaning as he goes along*, for the Christian believer, who *walks in the Spirit*, exults in the liberty of God's children, and *always triumphs in Christ*.

(5) To see the propriety of the preceding observation we need only take notice of the contrariety there is between the bondage of the *carnal penitent*, described Rom. vii. 14, &c. and the liberty of the *spiritual man* described in the beginning of that very chapter.—The one says, *Who shall deliver me?—Sin revives:—It works in him all manner of concupiscence—yea, it works death in him:—he is carnal—sold under sin—forced by his bad habits to do what he is ashamed of—and kept from doing what he sees his duty.—In him, that is, in his flesh dwells no good thing—Sin dwelleth in him.—How to perform that which is good, he finds not.* Though he has a desire to be better, yet still he does not do good—he does evil—evil is present with him. His inward man, his reason and conscience approve, yea delight in God's law, i. e. in that which is right: but still he does it not: his good resolutions are no sooner made than they are broken: for another law in his members wars against the law of his mind, that is, his carnal appetites oppose the dictates of his conscience,

science, and bring him into captivity to the law of sin: so that, like a poor chained slave, he has just liberty enough to rattle his chains, and to say, *O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death,* from this complete assemblage of corruptions, misery, and death! Is it not ridiculous to conclude, that, because this groaning slave has now and then a hope of deliverance, and at times thanks God through Jesus Christ for that hope; he is actually a partaker of the liberty, which is thus described in the beginning of the chapter? *Ye are become dead to the law [the Mosaic dispensation] that ye should be married to him, who is raised from the dead, that [instead of omitting to do good, and doing evil] we should bring forth fruit unto God.* For when we were in the flesh [in the state of the carnal man, sold under sin,—a sure proof this that the apostle was no more in that state] the motions of sin, which were by the law [abstracted from the gospel-promise] did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death. But now we are delivered from the [curse of the moral, as well as from the bondage of the Mosaic] law, That being dead wherein we were held: that we should serve God in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter, Rom. vii. 4, 5, 6. Immediately after this glorious profession of liberty, the apostle in his own person, by way of contrast, describes to the end of the chapter, the poor, lame, sinful obedience of those who serve God in the oldness of the letter: so that nothing can be more unreasonable than to take this description, for a description of the obedience of those, who serve God in the newness of the spirit. We have therefore in Rom. vii. 4, 5, 6, a strong rampart against the mistake which our opponents build on the rest of the chapter.

(6) This mistake will appear still more astonishing, if we read Rom. vi. where the apostle particularly describes the liberty of those who serve God in newness of the spirit, according to the glorious privileges

privileges of the new covenant. Is darkness more contrary to light than the preceding description of the carnal Jew is to the following description of the spiritual Christian. *How shall we that are dead to sin live any longer therein ! Our old man is crucified with Christ, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.* [Note : The carnal Jew, though against his conscience, still “*serves the law of sin,*” Rom. vii. 25. Now he that is dead, is freed from sin.—*Reckon ye yourselves also to be dead indeed unto sin.*—*Yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead* [Note : The carnal Jew says, “*Sin revived and I died,*” Rom. vii. 9. but the spiritual Christian is alive from the dead.]—*Sin shall not have dominion over you* [now you are spiritual : you need not say, “*I do the evil that I hate, and the evil I would not, that I do :*”] *for you are not under the law* [under the weak dispensation of the law of Moses ;] *but under grace,* *under the powerful, gracious dispensation of Christ.*]—*God be thanked, that [whereas] ye were the servants of sin* [when you carnally served God in the oldness of the letter] *ye have obeyed from the heart the form of doctrine, which was delivered you :* [that is, ye have heartily embraced the Gospel of Christ, who gives rest to all that come to him travailing and heavy laden.] *Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness—For when ye were the servants of sin, ye were free from righteousness—But now being carnal, sold under sin, ye serve the law of sin ! No : just the reverse ; but now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life,* Rom. vi. 2—22. Is it possible to reconcile this description of Christian liberty, with the preceding description of Jewish bondage ? Can a man at the same time exult in the one, and groan under the other ? When our opponents assert it, do they not confound the Mosaic and the Christian dispensation :—the workings of the spirit of bondage,

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dage, and the workings of the spirit of adoption ? And yet, astonishing ! they charge us with confounding law and gospel !

(7) We shall see their mistake in a still more glaring light, if we pass to Rom. viii. and consider the description, which St. Paul continues to give us of the glorious liberty of those, who have done with the oldness of the [Jewish] letter, and serve God in newness of the spirit. The poor Jew, carnally sticking in the letter, is condemned for all he does, if his conscience is awake. But there is now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus [who are come up to the privileges of the Christian dispensation] who walk not after the flesh, but after the spirit. For the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus [the power of the quickening spirit given me, and my fellow-believers, under the spiritual and perfect dispensation of Christ Jesus] hath made me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law [the letter of the Mosaic dispensation] could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son, condemned sin in the flesh : that the righteousness of the law [the spiritual obedience, which the moral law of Moses adopted by Christ requires] might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the spirit. For [so far from professing that I am "carnal and sold under sin," I declare that] to be carnally minded is death : [Well may then the carnal Jew groan, "Who shall deliver me from the body of this death !"] But to be spiritually minded is life and peace : so then, they that are in the flesh, [i. e. carnal, sold under sin] cannot please God. But ye are not in the flesh, but in the spirit, if so be that the spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the spirit of Christ, he is none of his : [he is, at best, a disciple of Moses, a poor, carnal Jew ; and remains still a stranger to the glorious privileges of the Christian dispensation] But if Christ be in you, the body is dead. [weak and full of the seeds of death] because of [original] sin ; but the spirit

Spirit is life [strong and full of immortality] because of [implanted and living] righteousness.—For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear, [like the poor, carnal man, who through fear and anguish groans out, “O wretched man that I am :”] But ye have received the spirit of adoption, whereby we [who walk in newness of the spirit and please God —we, who have the spirit of Christ] cry Abba, Father: the spirit itself bearing witness with our spirits that we are the children of God: and if children, then heirs; heirs of God [whom we please] and joint heirs with Christ, [through whom we please God,] Rom. viii. 1—17.

This glorious liberty, which God's children enjoy in their souls, under the perfection of the Christian dispensation, will one day extend to their bodies, which are dead [i. e. infirm and condemned to die] because of [original] sin. And with respect to the body only it is, that the apostle says, Rom. viii. 23, *We ourselves also, who have the first fruits of the spirit, groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption [of our outward man] that is, the redemption of our body: for [with respect to the body, whose imperfection is so great a clog to the soul] we are saved by hope.* [In the mean time] we know that all things work together for good to them that love God.—Who shall separate us [that love God, and walk not after the flesh, but after the spirit] from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation or distress, &c. do it? Nay, in all these things [much more in respect of sin, and carnal-mindedness] we are more than conquerors, through him that loved us, Rom. viii. 23—37.

And, that this abundant victory extends to the destruction of the carnal mind, we prove by these words of the context, *To be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace; because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So then they that are in the flesh [they that are carnally minded] cannot please God. But ye are not in the flesh,*

flesh, [ye are not carnally minded] but in the spirit [ye are spiritually minded:] if so be that the spirit of God dwell in you. [For where the spirit of the Lord is, and dwells as a spirit of adoption,] there is constant liberty; and if any man hath not that spirit, or if he hath it only as a spirit of bondage, to make him groan, *O wretched man!* he may indeed be a servant of God in the land of his spiritual captivity, but he is none of Christ's free-men: he may serve God in the oldness of the letter, as a Jew: but he does not serve him in newness of the spirit, as a Christian. For, I repeat it, *where the spirit of Christ is, and dwells according to the fulness of the Christian dispensation, there is a liberty, a glorious liberty,* which is the very reverse of the bondage, that Mr. Hill pleads for during the term of life. See Rom. viii. 14—21.

Whether therefore we consider Rom. vii., Rom. vi. or Rom. viii. it appears indubitable, that the sense which our opponents fix upon Rom. vii. 14, &c. is entirely contrary to the apostle's meaning, to the context, and to the design of the whole epistle, which is to extol the privileges of those who are Christ's, above the privileges of those who are Noah's or Moses's; or, if you please, to extol the privileges of spiritual Christians who serve God in newness of the spirit, above the privileges of carnal Heathens and Jews, who serve him only in the oldness of the letter.

S E C T I O N VIII.

An Answer to the Arguments, by which St. Paul's supposed carnality is generally defended.

IF the sense which our opponents give to Rom. vii. 14, is true, the doctrine of christian perfection is a dream, and our utmost attainment on earth is, St. Paul's apostolic carnality, and involuntary

tary servitude to the law of sin; with a hopeful prospect of deliverance in a death-purgatory. It is therefore of the utmost importance to establish our exposition of that verse, by answering the arguments, which are supposed to favour the antinomian meaning rashly fixed upon that portion of scripture.

Argument I. "If St. Paul was not *carnal* and *fold under sin* when he wrote to the Romans, why does he say, *I am carnal?* Could he not have said, *I was carnal once, but now the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set me free from the law of sin and death?* Can you give a good reason why, in Rom. vii. 14, the phrase *I am carnal*, must mean, *I was carnal?* Is it right thus to substitute the *past tense* for the *present?*"

Answer. We have already shewn, that this figurative way of speaking is not uncommon in the scriptures. We grant however that we ought not to depart from the literal sense of any phrase, without good reasons. Several such, I trust have already been produced, to show the necessity of taking St. Paul's words, *I am carnal*, in the sense stated in the preceding section. I shall offer one more remark upon this head, which, if I mistake not, might alone convince the unprejudiced.

The states of all souls may in general be reduced to three:—(1) That of *unawakened* sinners, who quietly sleep in the chains of their sins, and dream of self-righteousness and heaven.—(2) That of *awakened*, uneasy, reluctant sinners, who try in vain to break the galling chains of their sins:—And (3) That of *delivered* sinners, or victorious believers, who enjoy the liberty of God's children. This last state is described in Rom. vii. 4. 6. The rest of that chapter is judiciously brought in, to show how the *unawakened* sinner is rouzed out of his carnal state, and how the *awakened* sinner is driven

driven to Christ for liberty by the lashing and binding commandment. The apostle shows this by observing [ver. 7, &c.] how the law makes a *finner* [or, if you please, made him] pass from the *unawakened* to the *awakened* state. *I had not known sin*, says he, *but by the law, &c.* When he had described his unawakened state without the law, and began to describe his awakened state under the law; nothing was more natural than to change the sense. But, having already used the past tense in the description of the first [or the unawakened] state; and having said, *Without the law sin was dead—I was alive without the law once—Sin revived and I died, &c.* he could no more use that tense, when he began to describe the second [or the awakened] state: I mean the state, in which he found himself, when the commandment had rouzed his sleepy conscience, and slain his pharisaic hopes. He was therefore obliged to use another tense: and none, in that case, was fitter than the present: just as if he had said: “When the commandment flew the conceited pharisee in me;—when *I died* to my self-righteous hopes; I did not die without a groan; nor did I pass into the life of God without severe pangs: no; I struggled with earnestness, I complained with bitterness, and the language of my oppressed heart was: *I am carnal, sold under sin,*” &c. to the end of the chapter*. It is therefore

* Some time after I had written this, looking into Dr. Doddrige's Lectures on Divinity, page 451, I was agreeably surprised to find, that what that judicious and moderate Calvinist presents as the most plausible sense of Rom. vii. 14, is exactly the sense which I defend in these pages. Take his own words. “St. Paul first represents a man as ignorant of the law, and then insensible of sin; but afterwards becoming acquainted with it, and then thrown into a kind of despair, by the sentence of death which it denounces, on account of sins he is now conscious of having committed: he then farther shows, that even where there is so good a disposition, to *delight in the law*, yet the motives are too weak to maintain that uniform tenor of obedience, which a good man greatly desires, and which the gospel by its superior motives and grace does in fact produce.”

with the utmost rhetorical propriety, that the apostle says, *I am*, and not *I was carnal*, &c. But rhetorical propriety is not theological exactness. David may say as a poet, *God was wroth, There went up a smoke out of his nostrils, and fire out of his mouth devoured : coals were kindled by it :* but it would be ridiculous to take these expressions in a literal sense. Nor is it much less absurd to assert, that St. Paul's words, *I am carnal, sold under sin*, are to be understood of christian and apostolic liberty.

Arg. II. "St. Paul says to the Corinthians, *I write not to you as to spiritual men, but as to carnal, even to babes in Christ.* Now if the Corinthians could be at once *holy*, and yet *carnal*; why could not St. Paul be at the same time an eminent apostolic saint, and a *carnal, wretched man, sold under sin ?*"

Anf. (1) The Corinthians were by no means established believers in general, for the apostle concludes his last epistle to them, by bidding them *examine whether they were in the faith.*—(2) If St. Paul proved *carnal* still, and was to continue so till death, with all the body of christian believers; why did he upbraid the Corinthians with their unavoidable carnality? Why did he wonder at it, and say, *Ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you envying and strife, &c. are ye not carnal?* Might not these carnal Corinthians have justly replied, *Carnal physician, heal thyself?*—(3) In the language of the apostle, to be *carnal—to be carnally minded—to walk after the flesh—not to walk after the spirit—and to be in the flesh*, are phrases of the same import. This is evident from Rom. vii. 14. viii. 1, to 9: and he says directly, or indirectly, that to those who are in that state, *there is condemnation*: that they *cannot please God.*—And that they are in a state of *death*; because *to be carnal, or carnally-minded is death*, Rom. viii. 1. 6. 8. Now, if he

was

was carnal himself, does it not follow that he could not please God, and that he was in a state of condemnation and death? But how does this agree with the profession which he immediately makes of being led by the spirit, of walking in the spirit, and of being made free from the law of sin and death, by the spirit of life in Christ Jesus?—(4) We do not deny that the remains of the carnal mind still cleave to imperfect christians; and that, when the expression *carnal* is softened, and qualified, it may in a low sense be applied to such professors as those Corinthians were, to whom St. Paul said, *I could not speak to you as to spiritual*. But, could not the apostle be yet spoken to as a *spiritual man*? And does he not allow, that even in the corrupted churches of Corinth and Galatia, there were some truly spiritual men—some adult, perfect christians? See 1 Cor. xiv. 37, and Gal. vi. 1.—5) When the apostle calls the divided Corinthians *carnal*, he immediately softens the expression, by adding, *babes in Christ*: if therefore the word *carnal* is applied to St. Paul in this sense, it must follow that the apostle was but a *babe in Christ*: and if he was but a *babe*, is it not as absurd to judge of the growth of adult christians by his growth, as to measure the stature of a man by that of an infant?—6) And lastly: the man described in Rom. vii. 14, is not only called *carnal* without any softening, qualifying phrase: but the word *carnal* is immediately heightened by an uncommon expression, *sold under sin*; which is descriptive of the strongest bondage of corruption. Thus Reason, Scripture, and Criticism agree to set this argument aside.

Arg. III. “The *carnal* man, whose cause we plead, says, Rom. vii. 20, *If I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin which dwelleth in me*, that is, in my unrenewed part; and therefore he might be an eminent, apostolic saint in his

renewed part; and a carnal, wretched man, sold under sin, in his unrenewed part."

Anf. (1) The apostle speaking there as a *carnal*, and yet *awakened* man, who has light enough to see his sinful habits, but not faith and resolution enough to overcome them; his meaning is evidently this: *if I, as a carnal man, do what I, as an awakened man, would not; it is no more I that do it*, that is, I do not do it according to my *awakened* conscience, for my conscience rises against my conduct: *but it is sin that dwelleth in me*; it is the tyrant sin, that has full possession of me, and minds the dictates of my conscience no more, than an inexorable task-master minds the cries of an oppressed slave.

(2) If the pure love of God was shed abroad in St. Paul's heart; and constrained him, he dwelt in love, and of consequence, in God; for St. John says, *He that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God, and God in him.—He that is in you, is greater than he that is in the world.* Now if God dwelt in Paul by his loving spirit, it becomes our objectors to shew that an indwelling God, and indwelling sin, are one and the same thing; or that the apostle had strangely altered his doctrine when he asked with indignation, *What concord hath Christ with Belial?* For if *indwelling sin* [the Belial within] was necessary to nestle with Christ in St. Paul's heart, and in the hearts of all believers, should not the apostle have rather cried out with admiration, "See how great is the concord between Christ and Belial? They are inseparable! They always live in the same heart together: and nothing ever parted them, but what parts man and wife, that is, death."

(3) If a reluctance to serve the law of sin is a proof that we are holy as Paul was holy, is there not joy in heaven over the apostolic holiness of most robbers, and murderers in the kingdom? Can they not sooner or later say, "With my mind [or conscience]

conscience] *I serve the law of God: but with my flesh the law of sin.* How to perform what is good I find not. I would be honest and loving, if I could be so without denying myself; but I find a law, that when I would do good, evil is present with me? Nor can any thing be stronger upon this head, than the words of the inhuman princess, who being at the point of committing murder, cried out; "My mind [that is, my reason or conscience] leads me to one thing, but my new, impetuous passion carries me to another against my will. I see, I approve what is right, but I do what is criminal †."

Arg. IV. "The man, whose experience is described in Rom. vii. is said to *delight in the law of God after the inward man*, and to *serve the law of God with the mind*: therefore he was partaker of apostolic holiness."

Ansf. Does he not also say, *With the flesh I serve the law of sin?* And did not Medea say as much in her way, before she imbruied her hands in innocent blood? What else could she mean when she cried out, "I see and approve with my mind what is right, though I do what is criminal?" Did not the Pharisees for a time *rejoice in the burning and shining light* of John the Baptist? And does not an evangelist inform us, that Herod himself heard that man of God [*νέως*] with delight, and *did many things* too? Mark vi. 20. But, is this a proof that either Medea, the Pharisees, or Herod had attained apostolic holiness?

Arg. V. "The person who describes his unavailing struggles under the power of sin, cries out at last, *Who shall deliver me, &c*, and immediately

† Sed trahit invitam nova vis, aliudque cupido,
Mens aliud suadet. Video meliora, proboque,
Deteriora sequor.

OVID.
expresses

expresses a hope of future deliverance; *thank-
ing God for it, through Jesus Christ our Lord*, Rom. vii.
24, 25. Does not this shew that the carnal man
sold under sin was a christian believer, and, of con-
sequence, Paul himself?"

Ans. This shows only that the man sold under
sin, and groaning for evangelical liberty, is sup-
ported under his unhappy circumstances by a hope
of deliverance; and that, when the law, like a se-
vere school-master, has almost brought him to Jesus
Christ; when he is come to the borders of Canaan,
and is not far from the kingdom of God, and the city
of refuge, he begins to look and long earnestly for
Christ, and has at times comfortable hopes of deli-
verance through him. He has a faith that desires
liberty, but not a faith that obtains it. He has a
degree of the faith to be healed, which is mentioned
Acts xiv. 9, but he has not yet the actually-healing,
prevailing faith, which St. John calls the victory,
and which is accompanied with an internal witness
that *Christ is formed in our hearts*. It is absurd to
confound the carnal man, who struggles into Christ
and liberty, saying, *Who shall deliver me*, &c. with
the spiritual man, who is come to Christ, stands in
his redeeming power, and witnesses that the law of
the spirit of life in Christ Jesus, has made him free
from the law of sin and death. The one may say in
his hopeful moments, *I thank God [I shall have the
victory through Jesus Christ]*: but the other can say
I have it now. *Thanks be to God who giveth us the
victory, through Jesus Christ our Lord*, 1 Cor. xv.
57. The one wishes for, and the other enjoys li-
berty: the one has ineffectual desires; and the
other has victorious habits. Such is the contrast
between the carnal penitent described in Rom. vii.
14, and the obedient believer described in Rom.
viii. "There is a great difference" [says the Rev.
Mr. Whitefield] "between good desires and good
habits. Many have the one, who never attain the
other."

other." [Many come up to the experience of a carnal penitent, who never attain the experience of an obedient believer.] " Many have good desires to subdue sin ; and yet, resting in those good desires, sin has always had the dominion over them ;" [*with the flesh they have always served the law of sin.*] " A person sick of a fever may, desire to be in health, but that desire is not health itself." Whitefield's Works, Vol. iv. page 7. If the Calvinists would do justice to this important distinction, they would soon drop the argument which I answer, and the yoke of *carnality* which they try to fix upon St. Paul's neck.

Arg. VI. " You plead hard for the Apostle's spirituality : but his own plain confession shows, that he was really carnal, and sold under sin. Does he not say to the Corinthians, that *there was given him a thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to buffet him, lest he should be exalted above measure, by the abundance of the revelations which had been vouchsafed him?* 2 Cor. xii. 7. Now what could this *thorn in the flesh* be, but a *sinful lust*? And what this *messenger of Satan*, but *pride or immoderate anger*? Thrice he besought the Lord, that these plagues might depart from him, but God would not hear him. *Indwelling sin* was to keep him humble ; and if St. Paul stood in need of that remedy, how much more we?"

Anf. (1) *Indwelling anger* keeps us *angry*, and not meek : *indwelling pride* keeps us *proud*, and not humble. The streams answer to the fountain. It is absurd to suppose, that a *salt* spring will send forth *fresh* water.

(2) You entirely mistake the apostle's meaning. While you try to make him a modest *imperfectionist*, you inadvertently represent him as an impudent *Antinomian* ; for, speaking of his *thorn in the flesh*, and of the *buffeting of Satan's messenger*, he calls them

them his infirmities : and says, Most gladly therefore will I glory in my infirmities. Now, if his infirmities were pride, a wrathful disposition; and a filthy lust; did he not act the part of a filthy antinomian, when he said that he gloried in them? Would not even Paul's carnal man have blushed to speak thus? Far from glorying in his pride, wrath, or indwelling lust, did he not groan, *O wretched man that I am?*

(3) The apostle still speaking of his *thorn in the flesh*, and of *Satan buffeting him by proxy*, and still calling these trials *his infirmities*, explains himself farther in these words: *therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in persecutions, &c. for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong. Christ's strength is made perfect in my weakness.* Those infirmities—that thorn in the flesh—that buffeting of Satan, cannot then be indwelling sin, or any out-breaking of it; for the devil himself could do no more than to take pleasure in his wickedness: and [in Rom. vii.] the carnal penitent himself delights in the law of God after the inward man, instead of taking pleasure in his indwelling sin.

(4) The infirmities, in which St. Paul glories and takes pleasure, were such as had been given him to keep him humble after his revelations. *There was given to me a thorn in the flesh, &c.* 2 Cor. xii. 7. Those infirmities, and that thorn were not then indwelling sin, for indwelling sin was not given him after his visions; seeing it stuck fast in him long before he went to *Damascus*. It is absurd therefore to suppose that God gave him the thorn of indwelling sin afterwards, or indeed that he gave it him at all.

(5) If Mr. Hill wants to know what we understand by St. Paul's *thorn in the flesh*, and by the messenger of *Satan* that buffeted him: we reply, that we understand his bodily infirmities—the great weakness, and the violent head-ach, with which *Tertullian* and *St. Chrysostom* inform us the apostle was

was afflicted. The same God, who said to Satan concerning Job, *Behold he is in thine hand to touch his bone and his flesh, but save his life:*—The same God who permitted that adversary to bind a daughter of Abraham with a spirit of [bodily] infirmity for eighteen years: the same gracious God, I say, permitted Satan to afflict Paul's body with uncommon pains; and, at times, it seems, with preternatural weakness, which made his appearance and delivery contemptible in the eyes of his adversaries. That this is not a conjecture grounded upon uncertain tradition, is evident from the apostle's own words two pages before. *His letters, say they [that buffeted me in the name of Satan] are weighty and powerful; but his bodily presence is weak, and his speech contemptible,* 2 Cor. x. 10. And soon after, describing these emissaries of the devil, he says: *Such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ [to oppose me, and to prejudice you against my ministry:] and no marvel: for Satan himself [who sets them on] is transformed into an angel of light,* 2 Cor. xi. 13. But if the thorn in the flesh is all one with the *buffeting messenger of Satan*, St. Paul's meaning is evidently this: “God who suffered the Canaanites to be scourges in the sides of the Israelites, and thorns in their eyes, Josh. xxiii. 13, has suffered Satan to bruise my heel, while I bruise his head: and that adversary afflicts me thus, by his thorns and prickling briers, that is, by false apostles, who buffet me through malicious misrepresentations which render me vile in your sight.”—This sense is strongly countenanced by these words of Ezekiel, *They shall know that I am the Lord, and there shall be no more a prickling brier to the house of Israel, nor any grieving thorn of all that are round about them, that despised them,* Ezek. xxviii. 24.

Both these senses agree with reason and godliness, with the text and the context. Satan immediately pierced the apostle's body with preternatural

tural pain : and, by the malice of *false brethren*, the opposition of *false apostles* within the church, and the fierceness of cruel persecutors without, he immediately endeavoured to cast down or destroy the zealous apostle. But Paul walked in the perfect way, and we may well say of him, what was said of Job on a similar occasion, *In all this Paul sinned not*, as appears from his own words in this very Epistle : *I am exceeding joyful in all our tribulation — Our flesh had no rest, but we were troubled on every side : without the church were fightings, within were fears : [We had furious opposition from the heathens without ; and within, we feared lest our brethren should be discouraged by the number and violence of our adversaries :] Nevertheless God who comforteth those that are cast down, comforted us.—We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed ; we are perplexed, but not in despair ; persecuted, but not forsaken ; cast down, but not destroyed ; always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus.—For which cause we faint not ; but though our outward man perish [through the thorns in our flesh, and the buffetings of Satan :] yet the inward man is renewed day by day :—it grows stronger and stronger in the Lord.*—When I see St. Paul bear up with such undaunted fortitude, under the bruising hands of Satan's messengers, and the pungent operation of the thorns in his flesh ; methinks I see the General of the christians waving the standard of christian perfection, and crying, *Be followers of me :—Be wholly spiritual.—Take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand, and to witness with me, that, in all these things, we are more than conquerors through him that hath loved us.*

Arg. VII. “ You extol the apostle too much. He certainly was a carnal man still : for St. Luke informs us, that the contention [*παροξυμος*] was so sharp between Barnabas and him, that they departed one

one asunder from one another, Acts xv. 39. Now charity [*επαρποζενται*] is not provoked, or does not contend. Strife or contention is one of the fruits of the flesh; and if St. Paul bore that fruit, I do not see why you should scruple to call him a carnal, wretched man, sold under sin."

Ans. (1) Every contention is not sinful. The apostle says himself, Contend for the faith—Be angry and sin not.—It is good to be zealously affected always in a good thing.—Jesus Christ did not break the law of love, when he looked round with anger upon the Pharisees; *being grieved for the hardness of their hearts.* Nor does Moses charge sin upon God, where he says, *The Lord rooted them out of their land in anger, and in wrath, and in great indignation.* If St. Paul had contended in an uncharitable manner, I would directly grant that in that hour he fell from christian perfection; for we assert, that, as a carnal professor may occasionally cross Jordan, take a turn into the good land, and come back into the wilderness, as the spies did in the days of Joshua: so a spiritual man, who lives in Canaan, may occasionally draw back, and take a turn in the wilderness, especially before he is strengthened, established, and settled under his heavenly vine, in the good land that flows with spiritual milk and honey. But this was not the apostle's case. There is not the least intimation given of his sinning in the affair. Barnabas, says the historian, determined to take with them his own nephew, John Mark: but Paul thought not good to do it, because when they had tried him before, he went not with them to the work, but departed from them from Pamphilia, Acts xv. 38. Now, by every rule of Reason and Scripture, Paul was in the right: for we are to try the spirits, and lovingly to beware of men, especially of such men as have already made us smart by their cowardly fickleness as John Mark had done, when he had

left the itinerant apostles in the midst of their dangers.

(2) With respect to the word [*παροξυσμός*] contention or provoking, it is used in a good, as well as in a bad sense. Thus Heb. x. 24, we read of [*παροξυσμὸς αγαπῆς*] a contention, or a provoking unto love and good works. And therefore, granting that a grain of partiality to his nephew, made *Barnabas* stretch too much, that fine saying, *Charity hopeth all things*; yet, from the circumstances of *Barnabas's* parting with St. *Paul*, we have not the least proof that St. *Paul* stained at all his christian perfection in the affair.

If the reader properly weighs these answers to the arguments, by which our opponents try to stain the character of St. *Paul* as a spiritual man, he will see, I hope, that the apostle is as much misrepresented by Mr. *Hill's* doctrine, as christian perfection is by his fictitious creed.

S E C T I O N I X.

St. *Paul*, instead of owning himself a carnal man, still sold under sin, presents us with a striking picture of the perfect christian, by occasionally describing his own spirituality and heavenly-mindedness. And therefore his genuine experiences are so many proofs, that christian perfection is attainable, and has actually been attained in this life—What St. *Augustine* and the Rev. Mr. *Whitefield* once thought of Rom. vii.—And how near this last divine, and the Rev. Mr. *Romaine*, sometimes come to the doctrine of christian perfection.

MR. *Hill's* mistake with respect to St. *Paul's* supposed carnality, is so much the more astonishing, as the apostle's professed spirituality not only

only clears him, but demonstrates the truth of our doctrine. Having therefore rescued his character from under the feet of those who tread his honour in the dust, and sell his person under sin at an Antinomian market, I shall retort the argument of our opponents; and, appealing to St. Paul's genuine and undoubted experiences, when he taught wisdom among the perfect, I shall present the reader with a picture of the *perfect christian* drawn at full length. Nor need I inform Mr. Hill, that the misrepresented apostle fits for his own picture before the glass of evangelical sincerity: and that turning spiritual self-painter, with the pencil of a good conscience, and with colours mixed by the Spirit of Truth, he draws this admirable portrait from the life.—

Be followers of me.—This one thing I do; leaving the things that are behind, I press towards the mark, for the prize of my heavenly calling [a crown of glory]—Charity is the bond of perfection.—Love is the fulfilling of the law.—If I have not charity, I am nothing. And what charity or love St. Paul had, appears from Christ's words and from his own.—*Greater, [i. e. more perfect] love hath no man than this [says our Lord] that he lay down his life for his friends;* now, this very love Paul had for Christ, for souls, yea, for the souls of his fiercest adversaries, the Jews. Hear him. “The love of Christ constraineth us.—For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.—I long to depart and to be with Christ.—I count not my life dear unto myself, that I may finish my course with joy.—I am ready not to be bound only, but to die also for the name of the Lord Jesus.—If I be offered up on the sacrifice and service of your faith, I joy and rejoice with you all.” And in the next chapter but one to that, in which the apostle is supposed to profess himself actually *sold under sin*, he professes *perfect love* to his sworn enemies; even that love, by which

which the righteousness of the law is fulfilled in them, who walk after the spirit. Hear him: “ I say the truth in Christ, I lie not; my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost, that I, &c. could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my kinsmen according to the flesh;” meaning his inexorable, bloody persecutors, the Jews.

Nor was this love of St. Paul like a land-flood: it constantly flowed like a river. This living water sprang up constantly in his soul: witness these words: “ Remember, that, by the space of three years, I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears.—Of many I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they—mind earthly things: for our conversation is in heaven.—Our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation in the world.—I know nothing [i. e. no evil] by, [or, of] myself.—We can do nothing against the truth, but for the truth.—Whether we are besides [i. e. carried out beyond] ourselves it is to God: or whether we be sober [i. e. calm,] it is for your cause:” [i. e. the love of God and man is the only source of all my tempers, —“ Giving no offence in any thing, but in all things approving ourselves as the ministers of God, in much patience, by pureness, by kindness, by love unfeigned:—being filled with comfort, and exceeding joyful in all our tribulation.—I will gladly spend and be spent for you; though the more abundantly I love you, the less I be loved: sa rare instance this, of the most perfect love!]—We speak before God in Christ, we do all things, dearly beloved, for your edifying.—I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live, yet not I [See here the destruction of sinful self!] but Christ liveth in me; and the life I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God.—As always, so now also Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether

whether it be by life or by death; we worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh.—Mark them who walk so, as ye have us for an example. I have learned in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content: every where, and in all things, I am instructed both to abound and to suffer need; I can do all things through Christ who strengtheneth me.—Teaching every man in all wisdom, that I may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus; whereunto also I labour, striving according to his working, which worketh in me mightily.”

This description of the *perfect* christian, and of St. Paul, is so exceedingly glorious: and it appears to me such a refutation of the Calvinian mistake which I oppose, that I cannot deny myself the pleasure; and my readers the edification of seeing the misrepresented apostle give his own lovely picture a few more finishing strokes.—“ We speak not as pleasing men, says he, but as pleasing God, who tried our hearts. For neither at any time used we flattering words, &c. God is witness: nor of men sought we glory, neither of you, nor yet of others:—But we were gentle among you, even as a nurse cherisheth her children—Being affectionately desirous of you, we were willing to have imparted to you, not the gospel of God only, but also our own souls;—labouring night and day, because we would not be chargeable to any of you. Ye are witnesses, and God also, how holily, and justly, and unblameably we behaved ourselves among you.—The Lord make you abound in love one towards another, and towards all men, even as we do towards you.—Thou hast fully known my manner of life, purpose, faith, long-suffering, charity, patience.—I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me in that day.”

When I read this wonderful experience of St. Paul, written by himself; and see his doctrine of christian perfection so gloriously exemplified in his own tempers and conduct; I am surprised, that good men should still confound *Saul the Jew*, with *Paul the Christian*; and should take the Son of the earthly *Jerusalem*, which is in bondage with her children, for the Son of the *Jerusalem from above*, which is free, and is the mother of us all, who stand in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free.—But, upon second thoughts, I wonder no more: for if those who engross to themselves the title of *Catholics*, can believe that Christ took his own body in his own fingers, and broke it through the middle, when he took bread, broke it, and said, *This is my body which is broken for you*; why cannot those, who monopolize the name of *orthodox* among us, believe also that St. Paul spoke without a figure, when he said, *I am carnal, sold under sin, and brought into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members.*—*Brethren, I beseech you be as I am:*—*Those things which ye have heard and seen in me, do, and the God of peace shall be with you.* Now you have heard and seen, that the evil which I would not, that I do; and that with my flesh I serve the law of sin. In short, you have heard and seen, that I am carnal, sold under sin.

I am not at all surprised, that carnal and injudicious professors should contend for this contradictory doctrine, this flesh-pleasing standard of Calvinian inconsistency, and christian imperfection. But that good, and in other respects, judicious men, should so zealously contend for it, appears to me astonishing! They can never design to confound carnal bondage with evangelical liberty, and St. Paul's christian experience with that of Medea, and "Mr. Fulsome," in order to countenance gross Antinomianism: nor can they take any pleasure in misrepresenting the holy apostle. Why do they then patronise so great a mistake? I answer still:

by

by the same reason which makes pious Papists believe that consecrated bread is the real flesh of Christ. Their Priests and the Pope say so: some figurative expressions of our Lord seem to countenance their saying. We Protestants, whom the Papists call *carnal reasoners* and *heretics*, are of a different sentiment; and should they believe as we do, their humility and orthodoxy would be in danger. Apply this to the present case. Calvinian divines and St. *Augustin* affirm, that St. Paul humbly spake his present experience when he said, *I am carnal, &c.* We who are called "Arminians and Perfectionists," think the contrary; and our pious opponents suppose, that if they thought as we do, they should lose their humility and orthodoxy. Their error therefore springs chiefly from mistaken fears, and not from a wilful opposition to truth.

Nor is St. *Augustin* fully for our opponents: we have our part in the Bishop of *Hippo*, as well as they. If he was for them, when his controversy with *Pelagius* had heated him; he was for us, when he yet stood upon the scriptural line of moderation. Then he fairly owned, that the man, whom the apostle personates in Rom. vii. is "*homo sub lege positus ante gratiam*;" — *A man under the condemning, irritating power of the law, who is yet a stranger to the liberty and power of Christ's gospel.* Therefore, if Mr. *Hill* claims St. *Augustin* the prejudiced controvertist, we claim St. *Augustin* the unprejudiced Father of the Church; or rather, setting aside his dubious authority, we continue our appeal to unprejudiced Reason and plain Scripture.

What I say of St. *Augustin* may be said of the Rev. Mr. *Whitefield*. Before he had embraced St. *Augustin's* mistakes, which are known among us by the name of *Calvinism*, he believed, as well as that Father, that the disconsolate man who groans, *Who shall deliver me?* is not a possessor, but a seeker of

of christian liberty. To prove it I need only transcribe the latter part of his sermon entitled, *The Marks of the New Birth.*

" Thirdly [says he] I address myself to those, who are under the drawings of the Father, and are going through the spirit of bondage; but not finding the marks" [of the new birth] before-mentioned, are ever crying out [as the carnal penitent, Rom. vii.] " Who shall deliver us from the body of this death? Despair not: for notwithstanding your present trouble, it may be the Divine pleasure to give you the kingdom." [Hence it appears that Mr. Whitefield did not look upon such mourners as christian believers; but only as persons, who might become such if they earnestly sought. He therefore most judiciously exhorts them to seek till they find.—" The grace of God through Jesus Christ" adds he] " is able to deliver you, and give you what you want: even you may receive the spirit of adoption, the promise of the Father. All things are possible with him; persevere therefore in seeking, and determine to find no rest in your spirit, till you know and feel, that you are thus born again from above, and God's spirit witnesseth with your spirits, that you are the children of God."

What immediately follows is a demonstration that, at that time, Mr. Whitefield was no enemy to christian perfection, and thought that some had actually attained it: or else nothing would have been more trifling than his concluding address to perfect christians. Take his own words, and remember that when he preached them, by the ardour of his zeal and the devotedness of his heart, he shewed himself a young man in Christ, able to trample under foot the most alluring baits of the flesh of the world.

" Fourthly and lastly [says he] I address myself to those, who have received the Holy Ghost in all its sanctifying graces, and are almost ripe for glory. Hail, happy saints! For your heaven is begun upon:

upon earth. You have already received the first fruits of the Spirit, and are patiently waiting till that blessed change come, when your harvest shall be complete. I see and admire you, though alas! at ‡ so great a distance from you. Your life, I know, is hid with Christ in God. You have comforts, you have meat to eat, which a sinful, carnal, world, &c. knows nothing of. Christ's yoke is now become easy to you, and his burden light: you have passed through the pangs of the new-birth, and now rejoice that Christ Jesus is formed in your hearts. You know what it is to dwell in Christ, and Christ in you. Like Jacob's ladder, although your bodies are on earth, yet your souls and hearts are in heaven; and by your faith and constant recollection, like the *blessed angels* you do always behold the face of your Father which is in heaven. *I need not then exhort you to press forward, &c.* Rather I will exhort you in patience to possess your souls: yet a little while, and Jesus Christ will deliver you from the burden of the flesh, and an abundant entrance shall be administered unto you into the eternal joy, &c. of his heavenly kingdom." I have met with few descriptions of the *perfect christian* that please me better. I make but one objection to it. Mr. Whitefield thought, that the believers, who "*by constant recollection, like the blessed angels, always behold the face of their Father,*"

‡ At that time Mr. Whitefield was in Orders, and had received the *Spirit of adoption*. As a proof of it I appeal (1) To the account of his conversion at Oxford before he was ordained: and (2) To these his own words, "I can say, to the honour of rich, free, distinguishing grace, that *I received the Spirit of adoption* before I had conversed with one man, or read a single book on the doctrine of free justification by the imputed righteousness of Jesus Christ."—That is, before he had had any opportunity of being drawn from the simplicity of the scripture-gospel, into the Calvinian refinements. See his Works, Vol. IV. page 45.—Now, those christians, who leave babes and young men in Christ "at so great a distance from them," are the very persons whom we call Fathers in Christ, or perfect christians.

are so advanced in grace, that they “*need not be exhorted to press forward.*” This is carrying the doctrine of perfection higher than Mr. Wesley ever did. For my part, were I to preach to a congregation of such “happy saints,” I would not scruple taking this text, *So run that ye may [eternally] obtain:* nor would I forget to set before them the example of the perfect apostle, who said, *This one thing I do, leaving the things that are behind, and reaching forth, &c. I press towards the mark, &c.* Had I been in Mr. Whitefield’s cafe, I own, I would either have refused to join the imperfectionists, or I would have recanted my address to perfect christians.

So strong is the scriptural tide in favour of our doctrine, that it sometimes carries away the Rev. Mr. Romaine himself. Nor can I confirm the wavering reader in his belief of the possibility of obtaining the glorious liberty which we contend for, better than by transcribing a fine exhortation of that great Minister, to what we call *Christian Perfection*, and what he calls, *The Walk of Faith.*

“ The new Covenant runs thus; *I will put, says God, my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts, &c.* The Lord here engages to take away the stony heart, and to give an heart of flesh, upon which he will write the ten commandments, &c. The love of God will open the contracted heart, enlarge the selfish, warm the cold, and bring liberality out of the covetous. When the holy spirit teaches brotherly love, he overcomes all opposition to it, &c. he writes upon their hearts the two great commandments, on which hang all the law and the prophets. *The love of God, says the apostle to the Romans, is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost;* and to the Thessalonians, *Ye yourselves are taught of God to love one another.* Thus he engages the soul to the holy law, and inclines the

the inner man to love obedience. It ceases to be a yoke and a burden. How easy it is to do what one loves? If you dearly love any person, what a pleasure it is to serve him? What will not love put you upon doing, or suffering to oblige him? Let love rule in the heart to God and to man, his law will then become delightful, and obedience to it will be pleasantness. The soul will *run*; yea, inspired by love it will mount up with wings as eagles, in the way of God's commandments. Happy are the people that are in such a case."—[Now such a case is what we call, *The state of christian perfection, to the obtaining of which, Mr. Romaine excites his own soul by the following excellent exhortation.*]]

" This is the very tenor of the Covenant of Grace, which the Almighty Spirit has undertaken to fulfil." [If we mix faith with the promises, as Mr. Romaine himself will soon intimate] " And he cannot fail in his office. It is his crown and glory to make good his covenant-engagements. O trust him then, and put honour upon his faithfulness," [that is, if I mistake not, make good your own covenant-engagements.] " He has promised, to guide thee with his counsel, and to strengthen thee with his might, &c. What is within thee, or without thee to oppose thy walking in love with him, he will incline thee to resist, and he will enable thee to overcome. O what mayest thou not expect from such a divine friend, who is to abide with thee on purpose to keep thy heart right with God." [Query: when the heart is kept full of indwelling sin, is it kept right with God?] " What cannot he do? what will he not do for thee? Such as is the love of the Father and of the Son, such is the love of the Holy Ghost; the same free, perfect, everlasting love. Read his promises of it. Meditate on them. Pray to him for increasing faith to mix with them; that he" [not sin] " dwelling in the temple of thy heart, thou mayest have fellowship there with the Father and with the Son. Whatever in thee is pardoned through

through the Son's atonement, pray the holy Spirit to subdue, that it may not interrupt communion with thy God. And whatever grace is to be received out of the fulness of Jesus, in order to keep up, and to promote that communion, intreat the holy Spirit to give it thee with growing strength. But pray in faith, nothing wavering. So shall the love of God rule in thy heart. And then thou shalt be like the Sun, when it goeth forth in its might, shining clearer and clearer to the perfect day. O may thy course be like his, as free, as regular, and as communicative of good, that thy daily petition may be answered, and that the will of thy Father may be done on earth, as it is in heaven." *Walk of Faith.* Vol. 1, page 227, &c.

I do not produce this excellent quotation to insinuate, that the Rev. Mr. Romaine, is a perfectionist, but only to edify the reader, and to show, that the good, mistaken men, who are most prejudiced against our doctrine, see it sometimes so true, and so excellent, that, forgetting their pleas for indwelling sin, they intimate that our daily petition may be answered; and that the will of our Father may be done on earth as it is in heaven; an expression this, which includes the height and depth of all christian perfection.

S E C T I O N X.

St. John is for christian perfection, and not for a death-purgatory, 1 John i. 8, &c. is explained agreeably to St. John's design, the context, and the vein of holy doctrine, which runs through the rest of the epistle.

THE scripture declares that we are built upon the foundations of the Apostles; Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone: and St. Paul being deservedly

deservedly considered as the chief of the Apostles, and of consequence as the chief stone of the foundation, on which [next to the corner-stone] our holy religion is built; who can wonder at the pains which our opponents take, to represent this important part of our foundation as carnal, wretched and *fold under sin?* Does not every body see, that such a foundation becomes the *Antinomian structure* which is raised upon it? And is it not incumbent upon the opposers of Antinomianism, to uncover that *wretched* foundation by removing the heaps of dirt, in which St. Paul's spirituality is daily buried; and by this means, to rescue the holy apostle, whom our adversaries endeavour to *fell under sin* as a *carnal wretch?* This rescue has been attempted in the four last sections. If I have succeeded in this charitable attempt, I may proceed to vindicate the holiness of St. John, who is the last apostle that Mr. Hill calls to the help of *indwelling sin, christian imperfection, and a death-purgatory.*

Before I show how the loving apostle is pressed into a service, which is so contrary to his experience and to his doctrine of *perfect love*, I shall make a preliminary remark.—To take a scripture out of the context, and to make it speak a language contrary to the obvious design of the sacred writer, is the way of butchering the body of scriptural divinity. This conduct injures truth, as much as the Galatians would have injured themselves, if they had literally *pulled their eyes out, and given them to St. Paul:* an edifying passage thus displaced, may become as loathsome to a moral mind; as a good eye torn out of its bleeding orb in a good face, is odious to a tender heart.

Among the passages which have been thus treated, none has suffered more violence than this: *If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us,* 1 John i. 8.—“That’s enough for me,” [says a hasty imperfectionist:]

" St. John clearly pleads for the *indwelling of sin* in us during the term of life, and he is so set against those who profess deliverance from sin, and christian perfection in this life, that he does not scruple to represent them as *liars, and self-deceivers.*"

Our opponents suppose, that this argument is unanswerable. But to convince them that they are mistaken, we need only prove, that the sense which they so confidently give to the words of St. John, is contrary (1) To his design : (2) To the context : and (3) To the pure and strict doctrine, which he enforces in the rest of the epistle.

I. With respect to St. John's *design*, it evidently was to confirm believers, who were in danger of being deceived by *antinomian* and *anti-christian* seducers. When he wrote this epistle, the church began to be corrupted by men, who, under pretence of *knowing* the mysteries of the gospel better than the apostles, imposed upon the simple, jewish fables, heathenish dreams, or vain, philosophic speculations ; insinuating that their doctrinal peculiarities were the very marrow of the gospel. Many such arose at the time of the reformation, who introduced stoical dreams into protestantism, and whom Bishop *Latimer*, and others, steadily opposed under the name of *Gospellers*.

The doctrines of all these *Gospellers* centered in making Christ, indirectly at least, the minister of sin : and in representing the preachers of practical, self-denying christianity, as persons unacquainted with christian liberty. It does not indeed appear that the *Gnosticks*, or *Knowing ones*, [for so the ancient *Gospellers* were called] carried matters so far as openly to say, that believers might be God's dear children in the very commission of adultery and murder, or while they worshipped *Milcom* and *Astarto* ; but it is certain that they could already reconcile the verbal denial of Christ, fornication and idolatrous feasting, with true faith ; directly or indirectly teaching and seducing Christ's servants to commit

commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed to idols,
 Rev. ii. 20. At these Antinomians St. Peter, St. James and St. Jude levelled their epistles. St. Paul strongly cautioned Timothy, Titus, and the Ephesians against them. (See Ephes. iv. 14—v. 6.) And St. John wrote his first epistle to warn the believers who had not yet been seduced into their error: a dreadful, though pleasing error this, which, by degrees, led some to deny Christ's law, and then his very name: hence the triumph of the spirit of antichrist. Now as these men insinuated, that believers could be righteous without doing righteousness; and as they supposed, that Christ's righteousness, or our own knowledge and faith, would supply the want of internal sanctification and external obedience; St. John maintains against them the necessity of that practical godliness, which consists in *not committing sin, in not transgressing the law, in keeping the commandments, and in walking as Christ walked*: nay, he asserts that Christ's blood, through the faith which is our victory, purifies from all sin, and cleanses from all unrighteousness. To make him therefore plead for the necessary continuance of indwelling sin, or heart-unrighteousness, till we go into a death-purgatory, is evidently to make him defeat his own design.

II. To be more convinced of it, we need only read the controverted text in connexion with the context; illustrating both by some notes in brackets. —St. John opens his commission thus. [1st Epistle, chap. i. 5, 6, 7.] *This is the message which we have received of him [Christ] and declare unto you, that God is light, [bright, transcendent purity] and in him is no darkness [no impurity] at all. If we [believers] say, that we have fellowship with him [that we are united to him by an actually living faith,] and walk in darkness, [in impurity, or sin,] we lie and do not the truth. But if we walk in the light as he is in the light, [if we live up to our christian light and do righteousness,] we have fellow-*

ship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin. [—*For, let no man deceive you; he that does righteousness is righteous, even as he, Christ, is righteous;—and in him is no sin,* 1 John iii. 5, 7.] So far we see no plea, either for sin, or for the Calvinian purgatory.

Should Mr. Hill reply, that, “When St. John says, *The blood of Christ cleanseth us from all sin*, the apostle does not mean *all indwelling sin*; because this is a sin, from which death alone can cleanse us:” We demand a proof, and in the mean time we answer, that St. John, in the above-quoted passages, says, that *he who does righteousness in the full sense of the word, is righteous, as Christ is righteous;* observing, that *in him (Christ) is no sin.* So certain then, as there is *no indwelling sin in Christ*, there is *no indwelling sin in a believer, who does righteousness in the full sense of the word;* for he is made perfect in love, and is cleansed from all sin.

—Nor was St. John himself ashamed to profess this glorious liberty: for he said, *Our love is made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment; because as he [Christ] is perfect in love, and of consequence without sin:* {*so are we in this world,* 1 John iv. 17. And the whole context shows, that the beloved apostle spake these great words of a likeness to Christ with respect to the perfect love which fulfils the law, abolishes tormenting fear, and enables the believer to stand with boldness in the day of judgment, as being forgiven, and conformed to the image of God’s Son.

If Mr. Hill urges, that “The blood of Christ powerfully applied by the Spirit, cleanses us indeed from the guilt, but not from the filthiness of sin; blood having a reference to justification and pardon, but not to sanctification, and holiness:” We reply, that this argument is not only contrary to the preceding answer, but to the text, the context, and other plain scriptures.—(1) To the text, where our being cleansed from all sin is evidently suspended

suspended on our humble and faithful walk : *If we walk in the light as he is in the light; the blood of Christ cleanses us, &c.* Now every novice in gospel-grace knows, that true Protestants do not suspend a sinner's justification on his walking in the light as God is in the light.—(2) It is contrary to the context : for in the next verse but one, where St. John evidently distinguishes *forgiveness* and *holiness*, he peculiarly applies the word *cleansing* to the latter of these blessings. *He is faithful to forgive us our sin, [by taking away our guilt:] and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness, [by taking away all the filth of indwelling sin.]*—And (3) It is contrary to other places of scripture, where Christ's blood is represented as having a reference to *purification*, as well as to *forgiveness*. God himself lays, *Wash ye: make you clean; put away the evil of your doings; cease to do evil; learn to do well.* The *washing* and *cleansing* here spoken of, have undoubtedly a reference to the removal of the *filth*, as well as of the *guilt* of sin. Accordingly we read, that all those who stand before the throne, have both washed their robes; and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. That is, They are justified by, and sanctified with his blood. Hence our church prays “*that we may so eat the flesh of Christ and drink his blood, that our sinful bodies may be made clean by his body, and our souls washed [i. e. made clean also] through his most precious blood.*” To rob Christ's blood of its sanctifying power, and to confine its efficacy to the atonement, is therefore an Antinomian mistake, by which our opponents greatly injure the Saviour, whom they pretend to exalt.

Should Mr. Hill assert, that, “*When St. John says, If we walk in the light, &c. the blood of Christ cleanses us from all sin,* the loving apostle's meaning is not, that the blood of Christ radically cleanses us; but only that it *begets* and *carries* on a cleansing from all sin, which cleansing will be completed in a death-purgatory : ” We answer : (1) This assertion leaves Mr. Hill's doctrine open to all the

above-mentioned difficulties.—(2) It overthrows the doctrine of the Protestants, who have always maintained, that nothing is absolutely necessary to eternal salvation, and of consequence to our perfect cleansing, but an obedient, stedfast faith, apprehending the full virtue of Christ's purifying blood, according to Acts xv. 9, *God giving them the Holy Ghost, put no difference between them and us, purifying their hearts by faith:—not by death.*—(3) It is contrary to matter of fact; *Enoch and Elijah* having been translated to heaven, and therefore having been perfectly purified even in body, without going into the Calvinian purgatory.—But (4) What displeases us most in the evasive argument which I answer, is, that it puts the greatest contempt on Christ's blood, and puts the greatest cheat on weak believers, who sincerely wait to be now made perfect in love, that they may now worthily magnify God's holy name.

An illustration will prove it. I suppose that Christ is now in England, doing as many wonderful cures as he formerly did in Judea. My benevolent opponent runs to the *Salop Infirmary*, and tells all the patients there, that the great physician, the Son of God, has once more visited the earth; that he again heals all manner of sickness and diseases among the people, and cleanses from the most inveterate leprosy by a touch or a word. All the patients believe Mr. Hill; some hop to this wonderful Saviour, and others are carried to his footstool. They touch and retouch him: he strokes them round again and again: but not one of them is cured. The wounds of some are indeed skinned over for a time: but, it soon appears, that they still fester at the bottom, and that a painful core remains unextracted in every sore. The poor creatures complain to Mr. Hill, “Did you not, Sir, assure us upon your honour, as a christian gentleman, that Christ heals all manner of diseases, and cleanses from all kinds of leprosies?”—True, says Mr. Hill; but you must know,

know, that these words do not mean, that he *radically cures* any disease, or *cleanses* from any leprosy : they only signify, that he *begins* to cure every disease, and *continues* to cleanse from *all* leprosies ; but, notwithstanding all his cures *began* and *continued*, nobody is cured before death. So, my friends, you must bear your festering sores as well as you can, till death comes *radically* to cleanse and cure you from them all.—Instead of crying, Sweet grace ! rich grace ! and of clapping Mr. Hill for his evangelical message, the disappointed patients desire him to take them back to the Infirmary, saying, we have there a chance for a cure before death : but your great physician pronounces us incurable, unless death comes to the help of his art ; and we think that any surgeon could do as much, if he did not do more. [See Sect. XII. Arg. 20.]

If Mr. Hill says, that I beat the air, and that the text which he quotes in his "Creed for Perfectionists," to shew that it is impossible to be cleansed from all sin before death, is not 1 John i. 7, but the next verse ; I reply, that if St. John asserts in the 7th verse, that *Christ's blood*, powerfully applied by the spirit of faith *cleanses us from all sin*, that inspired writer cannot be so exceedingly inconsistent, as to contradict himself in the very next verse.

Should the reader ask : "What then can be St. John's meaning in that verse, where he declares, that, *If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us?*" How can these words possibly agree with the doctrine of a perfect cleansing from all sin?"

We answer, that, St. John having given his first stroke to the *Antinomian* believers of his day, strikes by the bye a blow at *Pharisaic* professors. There were in St. John's time, as there are in our own, numbers of men, who had never been properly convinced of sin, and who boasted, [as Paul once did]

did] that touching the righteousness of the law, they were blameless ; they served God—they did their duty—they gave alms—they never did any body any harm—they thanked God, that they were not as other men ; but especially, that they were not like those mourners in Sion, who were no doubt very wicked, since they made so much ado about God's mercy, and a powerful application of the Redeemer's all-cleansing blood. How proper then was it for St. John to inform his readers, that these whole hearted christians, these perfect pharisees, were no better than liars and self-deceivers ; and that true christian righteousness is always attended by a genuine conviction of our native depravity and by an humble acknowledgment of our actual transgressions.

This being premised ; it appears, that the text so dear to, and so mistaken by our opponents, has this fair, scriptural meaning : “ *If we* [followers of him, who came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance] *say we have no sin*, [no native depravity from our first parents, and no *actual* sin, at least no such sin as deserves God's wrath ; fancying we need not secure a particular application of Christ's atoning and purifying blood] *we deceive ourselves, and the truth* [of repentance and faith] *is not in us.*”

That these words are levelled at the monstrous error of self-conceited, and self-perfected Pharisees, and not at the glorious liberty of the children of God, appears to us indubitable from the following reasons :—(1) The immediately-preceding verse strongly asserts this liberty.—(2) The verse immediately following secures it also, and cuts down the doctrine of our opponents ; the apostle's meaning being evidently this :—“ Though I write to you, that *if we say*, we are originally free from sin, and never did any harm, *we deceive ourselves* ; yet, mistake me not : I do not mean that *we need continue under the guilt, or in the moral infection of any sin,*

sin, original or actual : for if we penitently and believably confess both, *he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness*, whether it be native or self-contracted, internal or external. Therefore, if we have attained the glorious liberty of God's children, we need not, through voluntary humility, say, that we do nothing but sin. It will be sufficient, when we are *cleansed from all unrighteousness*, still to be deeply humbled for our present infirmities, and for our past sins ; confessing both with godly sorrow and filial shame. For if we should say, *we have not sinned,*" [note ; St. John does not write, *If we should say, we do not sin,*] " *we make him a liar, and the truth is not in us;* common sense dictating, that if *we have not sinned,* we speak an untruth, when we profess that Christ has *forgiven our sins.*" This appears to us the true meaning of 1 John i. 8. when it is fairly considered in the light of the context.

III. We humbly hope, that Mr. Hill himself will be of our sentiment, if he compares the verse in debate with the pure and strict doctrine, which St. John enforces throughout his epistle. In the second chapter he says, *We know that we know him, if we keep his commandments, &c. Who so keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected. He that abideth in him ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked, &c. He that loveth his brother abideth in the light [where the blood of Christ cleanseth from all sin] and there is none occasion of stumbling in him.*

The same doctrine runs also through the next chapter. *Every one that hath this hope in him, purifieth himself as he (Christ) is pure. Who soever committeth sin transgresseth also the law, &c. and ye know, that he was manifested to take away our sins [i. e. to destroy them root and branch :] and in him is no sin. Who soever abideth in him sinneth not : who soever sinneth, does not [properly] see him, neither know him :*

him : he that does righteousness is righteous, even as he [Christ] is righteous. He that committeth sin, [i. e. as appears by the context, he that transgresseth the law,] is of the devil : for the devil sinneth from the beginning : for this purpose was the Son of God manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil. Whosoever is born of God, [Whosoever is made partaker of God's holiness, according to the perfection of the christian dispensation] doth not commit sin, [i. e. does not transgress the law ;] for his seed [the ingrafted word, made quick and powerful by the indwelling Spirit] remaineth in him, and [morally speaking] he cannot sin, because he is [thus] born of God.—For if ye know that he is righteous, ye know that every one that doth righteousness is born of him, and that he that doth not righteousness,—he that committeth sin, or transgresseth the law, is, so far, of the devil : for the devil transgresseth the law, i. e. sinneth from the beginning.—In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil.* Whosoever does not righteousness, [i. e. whosoever sinneth, taking the word in its evangelical meaning,] is not of God, 1 John iii. 3—11. ii. 29.

If Mr. Hill cries out, Shocking ! Who are those men that do not sin ? I reply, All those whom St. John speaks of, a few veries below, Beloved, if our heart condemn us ; [and it will condemn us if we sin, but God much more, for] God is greater than our heart, &c. Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, we have confidence towards God, &c. because we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight, 1 John iii. 20, &c.—Now we apprehend, all the sophistry in the world will never

* This doctrine of St. John is perfectly agreeable to that of our Lord, who said, that Judas had a devil, because he gave place to the love of money; and who called Peter himself Satan, when he favoured the things of men, in opposition to the things of God.

prove, that, evangelically speaking, *keeping God's commandments, and doing what pleases him, is sinning.* Therefore, when St. John professed to *keep God's commandments, and to do what is pleasing in his sight;* he professed what our opponents call *sinless perfection,* and what we call *christian perfection.*

Mr. Hill is so very unhappy in his choice of St. John, to close the number of his apostolic witnesses for *christian imperfection,* that, were it not for a few clauses of his first epistle, the anti-solifidian severity of that apostle might drive all *imperfect christians* to despair. And what is most remarkable, those few encouraging clauses are all conditional: *If any man sin* [for there is no necessity that he should:] or rather [according to the most literal sense of the word *απειπτιν*, which being in the aorist has generally the force of a past tense] *If any man have sinned:*—*If he have not sinned unto death:* *if we confess our sins:*—*if that which ye have heard shall remain in you:*—*if we walk in the light:*—then do we evangelically enjoy the benefit of our Advocate's intercession. Add to this, that the first of those clauses is prefaced by these words, *My little children, these things I write unto you, that ye sin not;* and all together are guarded by these dreadful declarations: *He that says, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar.*—*If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.*—*If any man say, I love God—and loveth not his brother* [note; he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law] *he is a liar.*—*There is a sin unto death, I do not say that he shall pray for it.* Let no man deceive you, *he that does righteousness is righteous.*—*He that committeth sin* [or transgresseth the law] *is of the devil.* To represent St. John therefore, as an enemy to the doctrine of *christian perfection,* does not appear to us less absurd, than to represent *Satan as a friend to complete holiness.*

SECTION

SECTION XI.

Why the privileges of believers under the gospel of Christ, cannot be justly measured by the experiences of believers under the law of Moses. A review of the passages, upon which the enemies of christian perfection found their hopes, that Solomon, Isaiah, and Job, were strong imperfectionists.

IF Mr. Hill had quoted *Solomon*, instead of St. John; and jewith, instead of christian saints; he might have attacked the glorious christian liberty of God's childien with more success: for *the heir as long as he is a child* [in jewish nonage] differeth nothing from a servant; but is under tutors [and school-masters] until the time appointed by the Father. Even so we, when we were children, were in bondage:—but when the fulness of the time was come, God sent his Son made of a woman, made under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons,—and stand in the [peculiar] liberty, wherewith Christ has made us [christians] free, Gal. iii. 1.—iv. 1. But this very passage, which shews that Jews are [comparatively speaking] in bondage, shews also that the christian dispensation, and its high privileges of the jewish dispensation, under which *Solomon* lived: for *the law made nothing perfect* in the christian sense of the word: and what the law could not do, God sending his only Son, condemned sin in the flesh, that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us [christian believers] who walk after the spirit; being endued with that large measure of it, which began to be poured out on believers in the day of Pentecost: for that measure of the spirit was not given before; because Jesus was not yet glorified, John vii. 39. But after he had ascended on high, and had obtained the gift of the indwelling Comforter for believers; they received, says St. Peter, the end of their faith, even the christian salvation of their souls: [a salvation this, which St. Paul justly calls

so great salvation, when he compares it with jewish privileges, Heb. ii. 3.] Of which [christian] salvation the [jewish] prophets have enquired, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you [christians] searching what or what manner of time the spirit of Christ, which was in them [according to their dispensation] did signify, when it testified before-hand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory [the glorious dispensation] that should follow [his return to heaven, and accompany the out-pouring of his spirit.] Unto whom [the jewish prophets] it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto us [christians] they did minister the things, which are now preached unto you with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven, 1 Pet. i. 9, &c. And, among those things, the scripture reckons the coming of the spiritual kingdom of Christ with power into the heart of believers, and the baptism of fire, or the perfect love, which burns up the chaff of sin, thoroughly purges God's floor, and makes the hearts of perfect believers an habitation of God through the spirit, and not a nest for indwelling sin.

As this doctrine may appear new to Mr. Hill, I beg leave to confirm it by the testimony of two as eminent divines as England has lately produced. The one is Mr. Baxter, who (in his comment upon these words, *A testament is of force after men are dead, &c. Heb. ix. 17,*) very justly observes, that "His [Christ's] covenant has the nature of a testament, which supposeth the death of the testator, and is not of efficacy till then, to give full right of what he bequeatheth. Note, that the eminent, evangelical kingdom of the Mediator, in its last, full edition, called the kingdom of Christ, and of heaven, distinct from the obscure state of promise before Christ's incarnation, began at Christ's resurrection, ascension, and sending of the eminent gift of the Holy Ghost, and was but as an embryo before."—My other witness is the Rev. Mr. Whitefield, who propoies and answers the following question:

question: "Why was not the Holy Ghost given till Jesus Christ was glorified?—Because till then he was himself on the earth, and had not taken on him the kingly office, nor pleaded the merits of his death before his heavenly Father, by which he purchased that invaluable blessing for us." See his Works, Vol. IV. p. 362.—Hence I conclude, that, as the full measure of the spirit, which perfects christian believers, was not given before our Lord's ascension, it is as absurd to judge of christian perfection by the experiences of those who died before that remarkable event, as to measure the powers of a fucking child by those of an embryo.

This might suffice to unnerve all the arguments which our opponents produce from the Old Testament against christian perfection. However, we are willing to consider a moment those passages by which they plead for the *necessary* indwelling of sin, in all christian believers, and defend the walls of the *Jericho* within, that accursed city of refuge for spiritual Canaanites and Diabolonians.

I. 1 Kings viii. 46, &c. Solomon prays, and says, *If they [the Jews] sin against thee, (for there is no man that * sinneth not) and thou be angry with them, and deliver them to the enemy, so that they carry them away captive,—yet, if they bethink themselves, and repent, and make supplication unto thee, and return unto thee with all their heart, and with all their soul; —then hear thou their prayer.* No unprejudiced person, who, in reading this passage, takes the parenthesis (for there is no man that sinneth not) in

* If Mr. Hill consults the original, he will find that the word translated *sinneth*, is in the future tense, which is often used for an indefinite tense in the potential mood, because the Hebrews have no such mood or tense. Therefore our translators would only have done justice to the original, as well as to the context, if they had rendered the whole clause, *There is no man that might not sin*; instead of *There is no man that sinneth not*.

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the connexion with the context, can, I think, help seeing that the Rev. Mr. Toplady, who, if I remember right, quotes this text against us, mistakes Solomon, as much as Mr. Hill does St. John. The meaning is evidently, that *there is no man who is not liable to sin*; and that a man actually sins, when he actually departs from God. Now *peccability*, or *a liableness to sin* is not *indwelling sin*; for angels, Adam, and Eve, were all *liable to sin* in their *sinless state*. And, that there are some men who do not actually sin is indubitable: (1) From the hypothetical phrase in the context, *if they sin*, which shows that their *sinning* is not unavoidable:—(2) From God's *anger* against those that sin, which is immediately mentioned. Hence it appears, that so certain as God is not angry with all his people, some of them do not sin in the sense of the wise man:—and (3) from Solomon's intimating, that these very men who have sinned, or have actually departed from God, may *bethink themselves, repent and return to God with all their heart, and with all their soul*, that is, may attain the perfection of their dispensation; the two poles not being more opposed to each other, than *sinning* is to *repenting*: and *departing from God*, to *returning to him with all our heart and with all our soul*. Take therefore the whole passage together, and you have a demonstration, that *where sin hath abounded, there grace may much more abound*. And what is this, but a demonstration that our doctrine is not chimerical? For if Jews [Solomon himself being judge] instead of *sinning* and departing from God, can *repent, and return to him with all their hearts*; how much more christians, whose privileges are so much greater!

II. "But Solomon says also, *There is not a just man upon earth, that does good and sinneth not*, Eccl. vii. 20."

(1) We are not sure that Solomon says it: for he may introduce here the very same man who, four verses before, says, *Be not righteous overmuch, &c.*

and Mr. *Tiplady* may mistake the interlocutor's meaning in one text, as Dr. *Trap* has done in the other.—But (2) Supposing *Solomon* speaks? May not he in general assert what St. *Paul* does, Rom. iii. 23, *All have sinned and come short of the glory of God, the just not excepted?* Is not this the very sense which *Canne*, (Calvinist as he was,) gives to the wise man's words, when he refers the reader to this assertion of the Apostle? And did we ever speak against this true doctrine?—(3) If you take the original word *to sin*, in the lowest sense, which it bears:—If it means in Eccl. vii. 20, what it does in Jud. xx. 16, namely *to miss a mark*, we shall not differ; for we maintain, that according to the standard of paradisiacal perfection, *There is not a just man upon earth, that does good, and misses not the mark of that perfection*, i. e. that does not lessen the good he does, by some *involuntary*, and therefore (evangelically speaking) *sinless defect*—(4) It is bold to pretend to overthrow the glorious liberty of God's children, which is asserted in a hundred plain passages of the New Testament, by producing so vague a text as Eccl. vii. 20. And to measure the spiritual attainments of all believers, in all ages, by this obscure standard, appears to us as ridiculous as to affirm, that of a thousand believing men, 999 are indubitably villains: and that of a thousand christian women, there is not one but is a strumpet; because *Solomon* says a few lines below, *One man among a thousand have I found; but a woman among all those have I not found*, Eccl. viii. 28.

III. If it be objected, that “*Solomon asks, Who can say, I have made my heart clean, I am pure, from my sin?*” Prov. xx. 9:” We answer:

(1) Does not *Solomon's Father* ask, *Who shall dwell in thy holy hill?* Does a question of that nature always imply an absurdity, or an impossibility? Might not *Solomon's query* be evangelically answered thus? “*The man in whom thy father David's*

vid's prayer is answered, *Create in me a clean heart, O God* :—The man who has regarded St. James's direction to the primitive Solifidians, *Cleanse your hearts, ye double-minded* :—The man who has obeyed God's awful command, *O Jerusalem, wash thy heart from iniquity, that thou mayest be saved*.—Or the man who is interested in the sixth beatitude, *Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God* :—That man, I say, can testify to the honour of the blood which cleanseth from all sin, that he has made his heart clean."

(2) However, if *Solomon*, as it is most probable, reproves in this passage the conceit of a perfect, boasting Pharisee, the answer is obvious: no man of that stamp can say with any truth, *I have made my heart clean*; for the law of faith excludes all proud boasting, and if we say with the temper of the Pharisee, *that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us*; for we have pride, and pharisaic pride too, which, in the sight of God, is perhaps the greatest of all sins.—If our opponents take the wise man's question in either of the preceding scriptural senses, they will find that it perfectly agrees with the doctrine of jewish and christian perfection.

IV. *Solomon's pretended testimony against christian perfection is frequently backed by two of Isaiah's sayings, considered out of the context, one of which respects the filthiness of our righteousness; and the other, the uncleanness of our lips.* I have already proved [Check IV. Let. viii.] that the righteousness which *Isaiah* compares to filthy rags, and St. *Paul* to dung, is only the anti-evangelical, pharisaic righteousness of unhumbled professors; a righteousness this, which may be called the righteousness of impenitent pride, rather than the righteousness of humble faith: therefore the excellence of the righteousness of faith cannot, with any propriety be struck at by that passage.

V. "But *Isaiah*, undoubtedly speaking of himself, says, *Woe is me, for I am undone, because I am a man of unclean lips.*" *Isaiah vi. 5.*

True: but give yourself the trouble to read the two following verses, and you will hear him declare that the power of God's spirit applying the blood of sprinkling (which power was represented by a live coal taken from off the altar) touched his lips; so that his iniquity was taken away, and his sin purged. This passage therefore, when it is considered with the context, instead of disproving the doctrine of christian perfection, strongly proves the doctrine of jewish perfection.

If *Isaiah* is discharged from the service into which he is so unwarrantably pressed, from the land of *Uz* our opponents will bring *Job*, whom the Lord himself pronounces perfect according to his dispensation; notwithstanding the hard thoughts which his friends entertained of him.

VI. *Perfect Job* is absurdly set upon demolishing christian perfection, because he says, *If I justify myself mine own mouth shall condemn me; if I say fin a pharisaic, self-justifying spirit) I am perfect, it shall also prove me perverse,* *Job ix. 20.*—But (1) What does *Job* assert here, more than *Solomon* does in the words, to which *Canne* on this text judiciously refers his readers, *Let another man praise thee, and not thine own mouth: a stranger, and not thine own lips.* Though even this rule is not without exception; witness the circumstances which drove *St. Paul* to what he calls a *confidence of boasting*.—(2) That professing the perfection of our dispensation in a self-abasing and Christ-exalting spirit, is not a proof of perverseness, is evident from the profession which humble *Paul* made of his being one of the perfect christians of his time, *Phil. iii. 15*, and from *St. John's* declaration, that his *love was made perfect*, *John iv. 17.* For when we have the *witnessing spirit*, whereby we know the things which

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are freely given to us of God, we may, nay at proper times, we should acknowledge his gifts to his glory, though not to our own.—'3) If God himself had pronounced Job perfect according to his dispensation, Job's modest fear of pronouncing himself so, does not at all overthrow the divine testimony: such a timorousness only shows, that the more we are advanced in grace, the more we are averse to whatever has the appearance of ostentation: and the more deeply we feel what Job felt when he said, Behold, I am vile: what shall I answer thee? I will lay my hand upon my mouth, Job xl. 4.

VII. “But Job himself, far from mentioning his perfection, says, *Now mine eye seeth thee, I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes,* Job xlvi. 6.”—And does this disprove our doctrine? Do we not assert that our perfection admits of a continual growth: and that *perfect repentance, and perfect humility*, are essential parts of it? These words of Job therefore, far from overthrowing our doctrine, prove that the patient man’s *perfection* grew; and that from the top of the *perfection* of gentilism, he saw the day of christian *perfection*, and had a taste of what Mr. Wesley prays for, when he sings,

O let me gain *perfection’s height, &c.*

Confound, o’erpow’r me with thy grace;
I will be by myself abhorr’d;
All might, all majesty, all praise,
All glory be to Christ my Lord!

VIII. With respect to the words, *The stars are not pure—the heavens are not clean in his sight;—his angels he charged with folly,* Job xxviii. 5.—iv. 18, we must consider them as a proof that *absolute perfection* belongs to God alone; a truth this, which we inculcate as well as our opponents. Besides, if

if such passages overthrew the doctrine of *perfectio*, they would principally overthrow the doctrine of *angelical perfection*, which Mr. Hill holds as well as we. To conclude:

IX. When Job asks, *What is man, that he should be clean? How can he be clean, that is born of a woman?*—Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? And when he answers, *Not one*: he means not one who falls short of infinite power. If he excluded Emmanuel, God with us, I would directly point at him who said, *I will, Be thou clean*; and at the believers who declare, *We can do all things through Christ that strengtheneth us*, and accordingly cleanse themselves from all filthiness, of the flesh and spirit, that they may be found of him without spot and blameless. Yea, I would point at the poor leper, who has faith enough to say, *Lord if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean*. They tell me, that my leprosy must cleave to me till death batter down this tenement of clay; but faith speaks a different language; *only say the word, Be thou clean, and I shall be cleansed: Purge me with hyssop, Sprinkle clean water upon me, and I shall be clean from all my filthiness.*

If these remarks are just, does it not appear, that it is as absurd to stab christian perfection through the sides of Job, Isaiah, and Solomon; as to set Peter, Paul, James and John, upon “*cutting it up root and branch*?”

SECTION

SECTION XII.

Containing a variety of arguments, to prove the absurdity of the twin doctrines of christian imperfection and a death-purgatory.

I Have hitherto stood chiefly upon the defensive, by showing that Mr. Hill has no ground to insinuate, that our Church, and Peter, Paul, James, and John, are defenders of the twin-doctrines of *christian imperfection* and a *death-purgatory*, I shall now attack these doctrines by a variety of arguments, which, I hope, will recommend themselves to the candid reader's conscience and reason.

If I wanted to encounter Mr. Hill with a broken reed, and not with the weapons of a Protestant, Reason and Scripture, I would retort here the grand argument by which he attempts to cut down our doctrines of *free-agency* and *cordial obedience*: “The generality of the *carnal Clergy* are for you, therefore your doctrines are false:” If this argument is good, is not that which follows better still: “The generality of *bad men* is for your doctrine of *christian imperfection*; therefore that doctrine is *false*; for if it were true, wicked people would not so readily embrace it.” But as I see no solidity in an argument by which I could disprove the very being of a God (for the generality of wicked men believe there is a supreme Being) I discard it, and begin with one, which I hope is not unworthy of the reader's attention.

I. Does not St. Paul insinuate that no soul goes to heaven without perfection, where he calls the blessed souls that wait for a happy resurrection, *πνευματα δικαιων τετελειωμένων*, the *spirits of just men made perfect*, and not *τετελειωμένα πνευματα δικαιων*, the *perfected spirits of just men*? Heb. xii. 23. Does not this mode of expression denote a perfection which

which they attained while they were men, and before they commenced *separate spirits*; that is, before death? Can any one go to an holy and just God, without first being made just and holy? Does not the Apostle say, that the *unrighteous*, or unjust, shall not inherit the kingdom of God? and that without holiness no man shall see the Lord? Must not this holiness, of whatsoever degree it is, be free from every mixture of unrighteousness? If a man has at death the least degree of any *unrighteousness* and *defiling* mixture in his soul, must he not go to some purgatory, or to hell? Can he go to heaven, if nothing that defileth shall enter the new Jerusalem? And if at death his righteous disposition is free from every unrighteous, immoral mixture, is he not a just man perfected on earth, according to the dispensation he is under?

II. If Christ takes away the outward pollution of believers, while he absolutely leaves their hearts full of *indwelling sin* in this life; why did he find fault with the Pharisees for cleansing the *outside of the cup and platter*, whilst they left the *inside full of all corruption*? If God says, *My son, give me thy heart*; if he requires *truth in the inward parts*, and complains, that the Jews drew near to him with *their lips, when their hearts were far from him*; is it not strange, he should be willing that the heart of his most peculiar people, the heart of christians, should necessarily remain *unclean* during the term of life?—Besides, Is there any other gospel-way of fully cleansing the *lips* and *hands*, but by thoroughly cleansing the *heart*? And is not a cleansing so far *pharisaical*, as it is *heartless*? Once more: if Christ has assured us, that *Blessed are the pure in heart*, and that *If the Son shall make us free, we shall be free indeed*, does it not behove our opponents to prove, that a believer has a *pure heart*, who is full of *indwelling corruption*; and that a man is *free indeed*, who is still sold under *inbred sin*?

III. When

III. When our Lord has bound the indwelling man of sin, the strong man armed, can he not cast him out?—When he cast out devils, and unclean spirits with a word, did he call Death to his assistance? Did he not radically perform the wonderful cure, to shew his readineſs and ability radically to cure those whose hearts are possessed by indwelling iniquity, that cursed sin whose name is Legion?—When the legion of expelled fiends entered into the swine, the poor brutes were delivered from their infernal guests, by being choaked in the sea. Death therefore cured them, not Christ. And can we have no cure but that of the swine? No deliverance from indwelling sin, but in the arms of death?—If this is the case, go, drown your plaguing corruptions in the first pond you will meet with, ye poor mourners, who are more weary of your life, because of indwelling sin, than Rebecca was because of the daughters of Heth.

IV. How does the notion of sin, necessarily dwelling in the heart of the most advanced christians, agree with the full tenor of the new covenant, which runs thus, *I will put my laws in their minds, and write them in their hearts:*—*the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus shall make them free from the law of sin and death?* If the laws of perfect love to God and man are fully put in the heart of a believer, according to the full tenor of Christ's gospel, what room remains for the hellish statutes of Satan? Does not the Lord cleanse the believer's heart, as he writes the law of love there? And when that law is wholly written by the spirit, *the finger of God*, which applies the *all-cleansing blood*, is not the heart wholly cleansed? When God completely gives *the heart of flesh*, does not he completely take away *the heart of stone*? Is not *the heart of stone* the very rock, in which the serpent, *indwelling sin*, lurks? And will God take away that cursed rock, and spare the venomous viper that breeds in its clefts?

V. Cannot

V. Cannot the little leaven of sincerity and truth, leaven the whole heart? But can this be done without purging out entirely the old leaven of malice and wickedness? May not a father in Christ be as free from sin, as one who is totally given up to a reprobate mind, is free from righteousness?—Is not the glorious liberty of God's children, the very reverse of the total and constant slavery to sin, in which the strongest sons of Belial live and die?—If a full admittance of Satan's temptation could radically destroy original righteousness, in the hearts of our first parents; why cannot a full admittance of Christ's gospel radically destroy original unrighteousness in the hearts of believers?—Does not the gospel promise us, that where sin has abounded grace shall much more abound? And did not sin so abound once, as entirely to sweep away inward holiness before death? But how does grace abound much more than sin, if it never can entirely sweep away inward sin without the help of death?

VI. Is there not a present, cleansing power, as well as a present, atoning efficacy, in the Redeemer's blood? Have we not already taken notice, that the same scripture which informs us, that if we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, declares also that, upon the same gracious terms, he is faithful and just to cleanse us from all unrighteousness? Now, if the faithful and just God is ready to forgive to-day a poor mourner who sincerely confesses his guilt; and if it would be doing divine faithfulness and justice great dis-honour to say, that God will not forgive a weeping penitent before the article of death; is it doing those divine perfections honour to assert, that God will not cleanse before death a believer, who humbly confesses and deeply laments the remains of sin? Why should not God display his faithfulness and justice in cleansing us now from inbred sin, as well as in forgiving us now our actual iniquities; if we now

now comply with the gracious terms, to the performance of which, this double blessing is annexed in the gospel-charter?

VII. If our opponents allow, that faith and love may be made perfect two or three minutes before death, they give up the point. Death is no longer absolutely necessary to the destruction of unbelief and sin: for if the *evil heart of unbelief departing from the living God* may be taken away, and the completely *honest and good heart* given two or three minutes before death; we desire to know, why this change might not take place two or three hours—two or three weeks—two or three years, before that awful moment?

VIII. It is, I think, allowed on all sides, that *we are saved*, that is, sanctified as well as justified by *faith*. Now that particular height of sanctification, that full *circumcision of the heart*, which centrally purifies the soul, springs from a peculiar degree of saving faith, and from a particular operation of the *Spirit of burning*:—a quick operation this, which is compared to a *baptism of fire*, and proves sometimes so sharp and searching, that it is as much as a healthy, strong man can do to bear up under it. It seems therefore absurd to suppose, that God's infinite wisdom has tied this powerful operation to the article of death, that is, to a time when people, through delirium or excessive weakness, are frequently unable to think, or to bear the feeble operation of a little wine and water.

IX. When our Lord says, *Make the tree good, and its fruit good*:—*a good man out of the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth good things*; does he suppose that the heart of his faithful people must always remain fraught with indwelling sin? Is indwelling sin a *good treasure*? Or does Christ anywhere plead for the *necessary* indwelling of a *bad treasure*

treasure in a good man? When the Spouse is all glorious within; when her eye is single, and her whole body full of light; how can she be still full of darkness, and inbred iniquity? And when St. Paul observes, that established christians are full of goodness, Rom. xv. 14, who can think he means, that they are full of heart-corruption, and (what is worse still) that they must continue so to their dying day?

X. If *christian perfection* is nothing but the *depth* of evangelical *repentance*, the *full assurance* of *faith*, and the *pure love* of God and man, shed abroad in a *faithful* believer's heart by the Holy Ghost given unto him, to cleanse him, and to keep him clean from all the filthiness of the flesh and spirit; and to enable him to fulfil the law of Christ, according to the talents he is entrusted with, and the circumstances in which he is placed in this world:—If this, I say, is *christian perfection*, nothing can be more absurd than to put off the attaining of it till we die and go to heaven. This is evident from the descriptions of *christian perfection* which we find in the New Testament. The first is our Lord's account in the beatitudes. For how can holy *mourning* be *perfected* in heaven, where there will be nothing but *perfect joy*?—Will not the loving disposition of *Peace-makers* ripen too late for the church, if it ripens only in heaven, where there will be no *peace-breakers*; or in the article of death, when people lose their senses, and are utterly disabled from acting a reconciler's part?—Ye, that are *persecuted for righteousness sake*, will ye stay till ye are among the blessed, to *rejoice in tribulation*? Will the blessed revile you, and say all manner of *evil of you falsely*, to give you an opportunity of being exceeding glad, when you are counted worthy to suffer for Christ's name?—And ye, double-minded christians, will ye tarry for the *blessedness* of the *pure in heart* till ye come to heaven? Have ye forgot that heaven is no *purgatory*; but a glorious reward

reward for those who are *pure in heart*; for those who have *purified themselves*, even as God is *pure*?

XI. From the *beatitudes* our Lord passes to *precepts* descriptive of christian perfection reduced to practice. *If thy brother hath ought against thee, go thy way, and be reconciled to him.*—*Agree quickly with thine adversary.*—*Resist not evil.*—*Turn the left cheek to him that smites thee on the right.*—*Give alms so as not to let thy left hand know what thy right hand does.*—*Fast evangelically.*—*Lay not up treasures upon earth.*—*Take no [anxious] thought what you shall eat.* *Bless them that curse you.*—*Do good to them that hate you, that ye may be the children of your Father, who is in heaven; for he maketh the sun to shine on the just, and on the unjust.* *Be ye perfect as your Father who is in heaven is perfect.* What attentive reader does not see, that none of these branches of a christian's practical perfection can grow in the article of death; and, that to suppose they can flourish in heaven, is to suppose that Christ says, “*Be thus and thus perfect, when it will be absolutely impossible for you to be thus and thus perfect?* *Love your enemies, when all will be your friends:* *Do good to them that hate you, when all will flame with love towards you?* *Turn your cheek to the smiters, when the cold hand of death will disable you from moving a finger;* or when God shall have fixed a great gulph between the smiters and you?”

XII. The same observation holds with respect to that important branch of christian perfection, which we call *perfect self-denial*. *If thine eye offend thee*, says our Lord, *pluck it out*:—*If thy right hand offend thee, cut it off, &c.* Now can any thing be more absurd, than to put off the *perfect performance* of these severe duties, till we die, and totally lose our power over our *eyes and hands*? Or, till we arrive at *heaven*, where nothing that offendeth can possibly be admitted?

XIII. St. Luke gives us in the *Acts*, a sketch of the perfection of christians living in community. *The multitude of them that believed, says he, were of one heart and of one soul.* They continued steadfastly in the Apostles doctrine, and in prayers.—They had all things common ; parting their possessions to all, as every man had need ;—Neither said any of them that ought of the things which he possessed was his own : and continuing daily in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they ate their meat with gladness and singleness of heart, praising God. When I read this description of the practical perfection of a christian church, I am tempted to smile at the mistake of our opponents, and to ask them, if we can eat our meat with gladness in the article of death ; or sell our possessions for the relief of our brethren upon earth, when we are gone to heaven ? ,

XIV. Consider we some of St. Paul's exhortations to the display of the perfection which we contend for, and we shall see in a still stronger light the absurdity which I point out. He says to the Romans, *Present your bodies a living sacrifice :—and be not conformed to this present world,—that ye may prove what is that perfect will of God.*—Having different gifts, use them all for God : exhorting with diligence, giving with simplicity, shewing mercy with cheerfulness, not slothful in business, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord, communicating to the necessities of the saints, given to hospitality, weeping with them that weep, being of the same mind, condescending to men of low estate, providing things honest in the sight of all men, heaping coals of fire,—coals of burning love and melting kindnes, on the head of your enemy by giving him meat, if he is hungry : or, drink, if he is thirsty : overcoming thus evil with good.—Again : Exhorting the Corinthians to christian perfection, he says, *Brethren, the time is short.—I would have you without carefulness.* It remaineth that they who have wives, be as if they had none ; they that weep, as if they wept not ;

not ; they that rejoice, as if they rejoiced not ; they that buy, as if they possessed not ; and they that use this world, as not abusing, &c.—Once more. Stirring up the Philippians to the perfection of humble love, he writes, *Fulfil ye my joy, that ye think the same thing, have the same love ; being of one soul, of one mind. Do nothing through vain glory, but in lowliness of mind esteem each the other better than themselves.* Look not every one on his own things, but every one also on the things of others. Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus, who humbled himself and became obedient even unto death.—Now all these descriptions of the practical part of christian perfection, in the very nature of things cannot be confined to the article of death, much less to our arrival at heaven. For when we are dying, or dead, we cannot present our bodies a living sacrifice ;—we cannot use this world as not abusing it ;—nor can we look at the things of others, as well as at our own.

XV. The same thing may be said of St. Paul's fine description of christian perfection under the name of charity. *Charity suffereth long ; but at death all our sufferings are cut short.* Charity is not provoked : it thinketh no evil : it covereth all things : it rejoiceth not in iniquity. It hopeth all things, believeth all things, endureth all things, &c. The bare reading of this description shows, that it does not respect the article of death, when we cease to endure any thing ; much less does it respect heaven, where we shall have absolutely nothing to endure.

XVI. If a perfect fulfilling of our relative duties is a most important part of christian perfection, how ungenerous, how foolish is it to promise the simple, that they shall be perfect christians at death, or in heaven ! Does not this assertion include all the following absurdities : ye shall perfectly love your husbands and wives in the article of death, when you shall not be able to distinguish your husbands and

wives from other men and women: or in *heaven*, where ye shall be like the *angels of God*, and have neither husbands nor wives:—Ye shall assist your parents and instruct your children with *perfect tenderness*, when ye shall be past assisting or instructing them at all:—when they shall be in *heaven* or in *hell*—past needing, or past admitting your assistance and instructions.—Ye shall inspect your servants with *perfect love*, or serve your masters with *perfect faithfulness* when the relations of *master* and *servant* will exist no more.—Ye shall *perfectly* bear with the infirmities of your weak brethren behind, and go where all your brethren will be free from every degree of trying weakness.—Ye shall entertain strangers, attend the sick, and visit the prisoners with *perfect love*, when ye shall give up the ghost, or when ye shall be in *paradise*, where these duties have no more place than *lazar-houses*, *sick-beds*, *prisons*, &c.

XVII. Death, far from introducing *imperfect Christians* into the state of *christian perfection*, will take them out of the very possibility of ever attaining it. This will appear indubitable, if we remember that *christian perfection* consists in *perfect repentance*, *perfect faith*, *perfect hope*, *perfect love* of an *invisible God*, *perfect charity* for *visible enemies*, *perfect patience* in pain, and *perfect resignation* under losses:—in a constant bridling of our bodily appetites, in an assiduous keeping of our senses, in a cheerful taking up of our cross, in a resolute *following of Christ without the camp*, and in a deliberate choice to suffer affliction with the people of God, rather than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season. Now, so certain as there can be no *perfect repentance* in the grave, no *christian faith* where all is *flight*, no *perfect hope* where all is *enjoyment*, no *perfect love* of an *invisible God* or of *visible enemies*, where God is *visible* and enemies are *invisible*; no bearing pain with *perfect patience*, when pain is no more; and suffering affliction with the people of God, where

no shadow of affliction lights upon the people of God, &c.—So certain, I say, as death incapacitates us for all these christian duties, it incapacitates us also for every branch of *christian* perfection. Mr. Hill might then as well persuade the simple, that they shall become *perfect* surgeons and *perfect* midwives —*perfect* masons and *perfect* gardeners in the grave, or beyond it: as to persuade them that they shall become *perfect* penitents and *perfect* believers in the article of death, or in the New Jerusalem.

XVIII. From the preceding argument it follows, that the graces of repentance, faith, hope, and christian charity, or love for an invisible God, for trying friends, and for visible enemies, must be perfected *here* or *never*. If Mr. Hill grants that these graces are, or may be perfected *here*, he allows all that we contend for. And if he asserts, that they shall *never* be perfected, because there is “*no perfection here*,” and because the perfection of repentance, &c. can have no more place in heaven than sinning and mourning, I ask, What becomes then of the scriptures, which Mr. Hill is so ready to produce, when he defends Calvinian perseverance? *As for God, his work is perfect.*—*Being confident of this very thing, that he who hath begun a good work in you (who have always obeyed, Phil. i. 6.) will perform, or (επετελεσει) will perfect it (if you continue to obey.)*—*The Lord will perfect what concerneth me.*—*Praying exceedingly that we (as workers together with God) might perfect that which is lacking in your faith.*—*Looking unto Jesus, the author, and (τελειωτην) the perfecter of our faith: for he is faithful that promised.* How can the Lord be faithful, and yet never perfect the repentance and faith of his obedient people? Will he sow such a blessed seed as that of faith, hope, and love to our enemies, and never let a grain of it either *miscarry* or bring forth fruit to perfection? Is not this a flat contradiction? How can a pregnant woman never *miscarry*, and yet never bring

bring forth the fruit of her womb to any perfection! Such however is the inconsistency which Mr. Hill obtrudes upon us as gospel. If his doctrine of *Calvinian perseverance* is true, no believer can miscarry; —no grain of true faith can fail of producing fruit to perfection: and if his doctrine of *Christian perfection* is true, no believer can be perfect: no grain of faith, repentance, hope, and love for our husbands and wives, can possibly grow to perfection. How different is this doctrine from that of our Lord, who, in the parable of the sower, represents all those who do not bear fruit unto perfection, as miscarrying professors!

XIX. If *impatience* was that bodily disorder, which is commonly called the *heart-burn*;—if *obstinacy* was a crick in the neck;—*pride*, an imposthume in the breast;—*raging anger*, a fit of the tooth-ache;—*vanity*, the dropsy;—*disobedience*, a bodily lameness;—*uncharitableness*, the rheumatism; —and *despair*, a broken bone; there would be *some sense* in the doctrine of *christian imperfection*, and reason could subscribe to Mr. Hill's creed: for it is certain, that *Death* effectually cures the heart-burn, a crick in the neck, the tooth-ache, &c. But what real affinity have *moral disorders* with *bodily death*? And why do our opponents think, we maintain a “shocking” doctrine, when we assert, that death has no more power to cure our pride, than old age to remove our covetousness? Nay, do we not see that the most decrepit old age does not cure men even from the grossest lusts of the carnal mind? When old drunkards and fornicators are as unable to indulge their sensual appetites, as if they actually ranked among corpses, do they not betray the same inclinations which they showed, when the strong tide of their youthful blood joined with the rapid stream of their vicious habits? Is not this a demonstration, that no decay of the body, no not that complete decay, which

we

we call *Death*, has any necessary tendency to alter our moral habits? And do not the ancients set their seal to this observation? Does not *Solomon* say, that *In the place where the tree falleth, there it shall be?* And has Mr. *Hill* forgotten those remarkable lines of *Virgil*?

Quæ cura nitentes
Pascere equos, eadem sequitur tellure repositos?

“ Disembodied souls have in the world of spirits, the very same dispositions and propensities which they had, when they dwelt in the body.”

XX. If God hath appointed *Death* to make an end of heart-pollution, and to be our complete saviour from sin, our opponents might screen their doctrine of a *Death-purgatory* behind God’s appointment; it being certain that God, who can command iron to swim, and fire to cool, could also command the filthy hands of death to cleanse the thoughts of our hearts. But we do not read in our Bible either that God ever gave to indwelling sin a lease of any believer’s heart for life; or that he ever appointed the king of terrors to deliver us from the deadly seeds of iniquity. And although the Old Testament contains an account of many carnal ordinances adapted to the carnal disposition of the Jews, we do not remember to have read there, *Death shall circumcise thy heart, that thou mayest love the Lord thy God with all thy heart.*—*Death will sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness Death will cleanse you. Death will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and (when you are dead) ye shall keep my judgments and do them.* And if death was never so far honoured under the Mosaic dispensation, we ask, where he has been invested with higher privileges under the gospel of Christ? Is it where St. Paul says, that *Christ hath abolished death,*

death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel? It appears to us, that it is an high degree of rashness in the Calvinists, and in the Romanists, to appoint the pangs of death, and the sorrows of hell to do the most difficult, and of consequence, the most glorious work of Christ's spirit, which is powerfully to redeem us from all iniquity, and to purify unto himself a peculiar people (not full of all inbred unrighteousness, but dead to sin, free from sin, pure in heart, and) zealous of good works. And we should think ourselves far more guilty of impertinence, if we nominated either *Death* or *Hell* to do the office of the *final purifier* of our *hearts*; than if we ordered a *sexton* to do the office of the *prime minister*, or an *executioner* to act as the king's *physician*.—With respect to salvation from the *root*, as well as from the *branches* of sin, we will therefore know nothing, as absolutely necessary, but *Jesus Christ and him crucified*, risen again, and ascended on high, that he might send the *Holy Ghost* to perfect us in love, through a *faith* that *purifies the heart*, and through a *hope*, which if any man hath, he will purify himself even as God is pure.

XXI. To conclude: if *christian perfection* implies the *perfect use* of the *whole armour of God*, what can be more absurd than the thought, that we shall be made *perfect christians* in heaven or at death? How will Mr. Hill prove that we shall *perfectly* use the helmet of hope, *perfectly* wield the shield of faith, and *perfectly* quench the fiery darts of the devil in heaven, where faith, hope, and the devil's darts shall never enter?—Or, how will he demonstrate, that a soldier shall *perfectly* go through his exercise in the article of death, that is, in the very moment he leaves the army, and for ever puts off the harness?

Mr. Baxter wrote in the last century a vindication of holiness, which he calls, *A Saint, or a Brute*; the

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the title is bold ; but all that can be said to defend iniquity cannot make me think it too strong : so many are the arguments by which the scriptures recommend a holy life. And I own to thee, Reader, that when I consider all that can be said in defence of *christian perfection*, and all the *absurdities* which clog the doctrine of *christian imperfection*, I am inclined to intimate Mr. *Baxter's* positiveness, and to call this Essay, *A Perfect Christian in this world, or a perfect Dupe in the next.*

S E C T I O N XIII.

Containing a variety of arguments, to prove the mischievousness of the doctrines of christian imperfection.

I. THE Arguments of the preceding section are produced to shew the *absurdity* of Mr. *Hill's* doctrine of *christian imperfection*: those which follow are intended to prove the *mischievousness* of that modish tenet.

I. It strikes at the doctrine of salvation *by faith*. *By grace ye are saved through faith*, not only from the guilt and outward acts of sin, but also from its root and secret buds: *Not of * works*, says the apostle, *lest any man shoule [pharisaically] boast*: and may we not add, *Not of death, lest he that had the power of death, that is, the devil, shoule [absurdly] boast?*

* Here, and in some other places, St. Paul by *works* means only the *deeds* of a Christless, anti-mediatorial law, and the obedience paid to the *jewish covenant* which is frequently called *the law*, in opposition to the *christian covenant*, which is commonly called *the gospel*, i. e. the *gospel* of *Christ*, because *Christ's gospel* is the most excellent of all the *gospel-dispensations*. The apostle

boast? Does not what strikes at the doctrine of faith, and abridges the salvation which we obtain by it, equally strike at Christ's power and glory? Is it not the business of faith to receive Christ's saving word, to apprehend the power of his sanctifying spirit, and to inherit all the great promises, by which he saves his penitent, believing people from their sins? Is it not evident, that, if no believers can be saved from indwelling sin through faith, we must correct the apostle's doctrine, and say, *By grace ye are saved from the remains of sin through death?* And can unprejudiced protestants admit so Christ-debasing, so Death-exalting a tenet without giving a dangerous blow to the genuine doctrines of the Reformation?

II. It dishonours Christ as a Prophet, for as such he came to teach us to be now *meek and lowly in heart*: but the imperfect gospel of the day teaches, that we must necessarily continue passionate and proud in heart till death; for *pride and immoderate anger* are, I apprehend, two main branches of *indwelling sin*. Again: my motto demonstrates that he publicly taught the multitudes the doctrine of perfection, and Mr. Hill insinuates that this doctrine is "shocking" not to say "blasphemous."

III. It disgraces Christ as the *Captain of our salvation*. For St. Paul says, that our Captain furnishes us with *weapons mighty through God to the pulling down of Satan's strong holds*, and to the bringing of every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ. But our opponents represent the devil's

therefore, by the expression *not of works*, does by no means exclude from final salvation the law of faith, and the works done in obedience to that law: for in the preceding verse he secures the obedience of faith when he says, *Ye are saved*, i. e. made partakers of the blessings of the christian dispensation *by grace through faith*. Here then the word *by grace* secures the first gospel axiom, and the *through faith* secures the second.

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strong holds as absolutely impregnable. No weapons of our warfare can pull down Apollyon's throne. Inbred sin shall maintain its place in man's heart till death strike the victorious blow. Christ may indeed fight against the Jericho within, as Joab fought against Rabbah of the children of Ammon: but then he must send for Death, as Joab sent for David, saying, *I have fought against Jericho, and have taken the city of waters: now therefore, gather the rest of the people together, and encamp against the city, and take it, lest I take the city, and it be called after my name,* 2 Sam. xii. 26.

IV. It pours contempt upon him as the *Surety* of the new covenant, in which God has engaged himself to deliver obedient believers from their enemies, that they may serve him without (tormenting) fear all the days of their life; for how does he do his office in this respect, if he never sees, that such believers be delivered from their most oppressive and inveterate enemy, *indwelling sin*? Or if that deliverance takes place only at death, how can they, in consequence of their death-freedom serve God without fear all the days of their life?

V. It affronts Christ as a King when it represents the believer's heart, which is Christ's spiritual throne, as being necessarily full of *indwelling sin*,—a spiritual rebel, who, notwithstanding the joint efforts of Christ and the believer, maintains his ground against them both during the term of life. —Again: does not a good king deliver his loyal subjects from oppression, and avenge them of a tyrannical adversary, when they cry to him in their distress? But does our Lord show himself such a king, if he never avenges them, or turns the usurper, the murderer *sin* out of their breast? —Once more. If our deliverance from sin depends upon the stroke of death, and not upon a stroke of Christ's grace, might we not call upon the *king of terrors*,

terrors, as well as upon the king of saints, for deliverance from the remains of sin? But where is the difference between saying, *O Death, help us*, and *crying, O Baal, save us?*

VI. It injures Christ as a *Restorer* of pure, spiritual worship in God's spiritual temple—the heart of man. For it indirectly represents him as a pharisaic Saviour, who made much ado about driving with a whip harmless sheep and oxen out of his Father's material temple; but gives full leave to Satan, not only to bring *sheep* and *doves* into the believer's heart, but also to harbour and breed there, *during the term of life* the *swelling toad* [pride] and the *hissing viper* [envy:] to say nothing of the greedy dog [avarice,] and the filthy swine [impurity:] under pretence of "*exercising the patience and engaging the industry*" of the worshippers, if we may believe the Calvin of the day. See Arg. I. Sect. XIV. against Christian Perfection at the end of this section.

VII. It insults Christ as a *Priest*: for our Melchisedec shed his all-cleansing blood upon the cross, and now pours his all-availing prayer before the throne; asking, that upon evangelical terms we may now be *cleansed from all unrighteousness* and *perfected in one*. But if we assert that believers, let them be ever so faithful, can never be thus cleansed and perfected in one till Death come to the Saviour's assistance, do we not place our Lord's cleansing blood, and powerful intercession, and of consequence his priesthood, in an unscriptural and contemptible light?

Should Mr. Hill attempt to retort this argument by saying "That it is our doctrine, not his, which derogates from the honour of Christ's priesthood, because we should no longer need our High-priest's blood if we were cleansed from all sin :" I reply:

(i) *Perfe&*

(1) Perfect christians need as much the virtue of Christ's blood, to prevent the guilt and pollution of sin from returning, as imperfect christians want it to drive that guilt and pollution away. It is not enough that the blood of the true paschal Lamb has been sprinkled upon our souls to keep off the destroyer: it must still remain there to hinder his coming back *with seven other spirits more wicked than himself.*—(2) Mr. Hill is in the dark: he calls for a light; and when it is brought, he observes, the darkness of his room is now totally removed. Is it so, Sir, replies his footman; then you need these candles no more: if they have totally removed the darkness of your apartment, you have no more need of them. Mr. Hill smiles at the absurdity of his servant's argument: and yet, it is well if he does not admire the wisdom of my opponent's objection.—(3) The hearts of perfect christians are cleansed, and kept clean by faith; and christian perfection means the perfection of christian faith, whose property it is to endear Christ and his blood more and more: nothing then can be less reasonable than to say, that, upon our principles, perfect believers have done with the atoning blood.—(4) Such believers continually *overcome the accuser of the brethren through the blood of the Lamb;* there is no moment therefore, in which they can spare it: they are *feeble* believers who can yet dispense with its constant application: and hence it is, that they continue *feeble*. None make so much use of Christ's blood as perfect christians. Once it was only their *medicine*, which they took now and then, when a fit of fear, or a pang of guilt, obliged them to it: but now it is the divine *preservative*, which keeps off the infection of sin. Now it is the *reviving cordial*, which they take to prevent their growing weary, or faint in their minds: now it is their daily *drink*: now it is what they sprinkle their every thought, word, and work with: in a word it is that blood, which constantly *speaks before*

fore God and in their conscience, better things than the blood of Abel, and actually procures for them all the blessings which they enjoy or expect. To say, therefore, that the doctrine of Christian perfection supersedes the need of Christ's blood, is not less absurd than to assert that the perfection of navigation renders the great deep an useless reservoir of water.—Lastly: are not the saints before the throne perfectly sinless? And who are more ready than they to extol the blood and sing the song of the Lamb: to him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, be glory, &c? If an angel preached to them the modern gospel, and desired them to plead for the remains of sin, lest they should lose their peculiar value for the atoning blood; would they not all suspect him to be an angel of darkness, transforming himself into an angel of light? And shall we be the dupes of the Tempter, who deceives good men, that they may deceive us by a similar argument?

VIII. It discredits Christ as the *Fulfiller* of the Father's promise, and as the *Sender* of the indwelling, abiding Comforter, that our joy may be full: for the spirit never takes his *constant abode* as a Comforter in a heart full of *indwelling sin*. If he visits a sinful heart with his consolations, it is only as a *guest that tarrieth but a day*. When he enters a soul fraught with inbred corruption he rather acts as a *Reprover* than as a *Comforter*; throwing down the tables of the spiritual money-changers; hindering the vessels which are not holiness unto the Lord from being carried through God's spiritual temple, and expelling, according to the degree of our faith, whatsoever would make God's house a *den of thieves*.

But instead of this Mr. Hill's doctrine considers the heart of believers as a *den of lions*; and represents Christ's spirit not as the *destroyer*, but as the *Keeper* of the wild beasts, and evil tempers which

dwell in our breasts. This I conclude from these words of the Rev. Mr. *Toplady*.—“They (indwelling sin and unholy tempers) do not quite expire, till the renewed soul is taken up from earth to heaven. In the mean time these hated remains of depravity will, too often, like prisoners in a dungeon, crawl towards the window (though in chains) and show themselves through the grate. Nay, I do not know, whether the strivings of inherent corruption for mastery, be not, frequently, more violent in a regenerate person, than even in one who is dead in trespasses: as wild beasts are, sometimes the more rampant and furious for being wounded.”—See *Caveat against unfound doctrines*, page 54.—When I read this gospel, I cannot but throw in a Caveat against Mr. *Toplady's* Caveat. For if his is not *unfound*, every body must allow it to be *uncomfortable* and *unsafe*. Who would not think it dreadfully dangerous to dwell with one wild beast that cannot be killed, unless we are first killed ourselves? But how much more dangerous is it to be condemned to dwell for life with a parcel of them, which are not only immortal so long as we are alive, but are sometimes the more rampant and furious for being wounded. The Saviour preached by Mr. *Toplady* only wounds the Egyptian Dragon, the inward Pharoah, and makes him rage, but our Jesus drowns him in the sea of his own blood, barely by stretching out the rod of his power, when we stretch out to him our arms of faith. Mr. *Hill's* Redeemer only takes Agag prisoner as double-minded *Saul* did: but our Redeemer hews him in pieces as upright *Samuel*. The Christ of the Calvinists says, “Confine the enemy: though he may possibly be fiercer than before.” But our's thrusts out the enemy before us, and says, Destroy, Deut. xxxii. 27. O ye preachers of finished salvation, we leave it to your candor to decide which of these doctrines bring most glory to the saving name of Jesus.

IX. The doctrine of our *necessary* continuance in indwelling sin to our last moments, makes us naturally overlook or despise the exceeding great and precious promises given unto us, that by these we might be partakers of the divine nature [that is, of God's perfect holiness ;] having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust, 2 Peter i. 4, and by that means it naturally defeats the full effect of evangelical truths and ministerial labours; an effect this, which is thus described by St. Paul: *teaching every man in all wisdom, that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus, i. e. perfect according to the richest dispensation of divine grace, which is the gospel of Christ Jesus,* Col. i. 28.—Again, *The scripture is profitable for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works,* 2 Tim. iii. 16. Now we apprehend that the perfection, which thoroughly furnishes believers unto all good works, is a perfection productive of all the good works which are [evangelically as well as providentially] prepared that we should walk in them before death: because (whatever Mr. Hill may insinuate to the contrary in England, and Father Walsh at Paris) the scripture says, *Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor device [in death, i. e.] in the grave whither thou goest.* For as the tree falls so it lies: if it fall full of rottenness with a brood of vipers and a never-dying worm in its hollow centre; it will continue in that very condition: and woe to the man who trusts that the pangs of death will kill the worm, or that a purgative fire will spare the rotten wood, and consume the vipers.

X. It defeats in part the end of the gospel precepts, to the fulfilling of which gospel-promises are but a means. All the law, the prophets, and the apostolic writings, hang on these two commandments: “*Thou shalt love God with all thy heart, and thy neighbour as thyself, through penitential faith in the light of thy dispensation;*”

dispensation;" that is, in two words, Thou shalt be *evangelically perfect*. Now if we believe that it is absolutely impossible to be thus perfect by keeping these two blessed commandments in faith: we cannot but believe also that God who requires us to keep them is defective in wisdom, equity and goodness, by requiring us to do what is absolutely impossible: and we represent our Church as a wicked step-mother which betrays all her children into the wanton commission of perjury, by requiring of every one of them in the sacrament of baptism a most solemn vow by which they bind themselves in the presence of God and of the congregation, that they will keep God's holy will and commandments [i. e. that they will keep God's evangelical law] and walk in the same all the days of their life.

XI. It has a necessary tendency to unnerve our deepest prayers. How can we pray in faith, that God would help us to do his will on earth as it is done in heaven, or that he would cleanse the thoughts of our hearts that we may perfectly love him and worthily magnify his holy name:—How can we, I say, ask this in faith, if we disbelieve the very possibility of having these petitions answered? And what poor encouragement had Epaphras upon the scheme which we oppose, *always to labour fervently for the Colossians in prayers, that they might stand perfect and complete in the will of God*; or St. Paul, to wish that the very God of peace would sanctify the Thessalonians wholly, and that their whole spirit, and soul, and body, might be preserved blameless, if these requests could not be granted before death, and were unavoidably to be granted to them and to all believers in the article of death?

XII. It soothes lukewarm, unholy professors, and encourages them to sit quietly under the vine of Sodom, and under their own barren fig-tree: I mean

mean under the baneful influence of their *unbelief* and *indwelling sin*; nothing being more pleasing to the carnal mind than this Syren-song: "it is absolutely impossible that the thoughts of your hearts should be cleansed in this life. God himself does not expect that you should be purified from all iniquity on this side the grave. It is proper that sin should dwell in your heart by unbelief, to en-dear Christ to you, and so to work together for your good." The preachers of mere morality insinuate, that God does not forgive sins before death. This dangerous, uncomfortable doctrine damps the faith of penitents, who think it absurd to expect before death what they are taught they can only receive at death. And, as it is with the pardon of sins, so it is also with the *cleansing from all unrighteousness*. The preachers of christian imperfection tell their hearers, that no body can be cleansed from *heart-sin before death*. This new gospel makes them secretly trust in a *death purgatory*, and hinders them from pleading in faith the promise of full sanctification before death stares them in the face; while others like spared Agag, madly ventute upon the spear of the king of terrors with their hearts full of indwelling sin. The dead tell no tales now, but it will be well if in the day of the resurrection, those who plead for the *necessary* indwelling of sin during the term of life, do not meet in the great day with some deluded souls, who will give them no thanks for betraying them, to their last moments into the hands of indwelling sin, by insinuating that there can be no deliverance from our evil tempers before we are ready to exchange a death-bed for a coffin.

XIII. It greatly discourages willing Israelites, and weakens the hands of the faithful spies, who want to lead feeble believers on, and to take by force the kingdom which consists in righteousness, peace and joy in the *Holy Ghost*; nothing being more

more proper to damp their ardour, than such a speech as this : you may strive against your corruptions and evil tempers, as long as you please : but you shall never get rid of them : the *Jericho* within is impregnable : it is fenced up to heaven, and garrisoned by the tall, invincible, immortal sons of Anak : so strong are these adversaries, that the twelve apostles, with the help of Christ and the Holy Ghost, could never turn one of them out of his post. Nay, they so buffeted and overpowered St. Paul, the most zealous of the apostles, that they fairly took him prisoner, *fold him under sin*, and made him groan to the last, *O wretched, carnal man that I am, who shall deliver me from the law of my inbred corruptions, which bring me into captivity to the law of sin : I thank God through death.* So then, with the flesh you must, as well as St. Paul, serve the law of sin till you die. Nor need you fret at these tidings ; for they are the pure Gospel of Christ—the genuine doctrines of free grace, and christian liberty. In Christ you are free, but in yourselves you must continue to serve the law of sin : and indeed why should you not do it, since the sins of a christian are for his good, and even the dung of a sheep of Christ is of some use—nay of the most excellent use if we believe Mr. Hill ; for the most grievous falls—falls into repeated acts of adultery and into deliberate murder, serve to make us know our place, to drive us nearer to Christ, and to make us sing louder the praises of restoring grace. Besides, that gentleman represents those who preach deliverance from indwelling sin before we go into a death-purgatory, as men of a pharisaic cast—blind men, who never saw their own hearts—proud men, who oppose the righteousness of God,—vain men, who aspire at robbing Christ of the glory of being alone without sin : in short, men who hold doctrines which are shocking, not to say blasphemous.

How would this speech damp our desires after salvation from indwelling sin ! How would it make us

us hug the cursed chains of our inbred corruptions, if the cloven foot of the imperfect, unchaste *Diana*, which it holds out to public view without gospel-sandals, was not sufficient to shock us back from this impure gospel to the pure gospel of Jesus Christ! And yet (if I am not mistaken) this dangerous speech only unfolds the scope of Mr. Hill's "Creed for Perfectionists."

XIV. To conclude: the modish doctrine of christian imperfection and death-purgatory, is so contrived, that carnal men will always prefer the purgatory of the Calvinists to that of the Papists. For the Papists prescribe I know not how many cups of divine wrath and dire vengeance, which are to be drunk by the souls of the believers who die *half-purged*, or *three-parts cleansed*. These *half-damned*, or a *quarter-damned* creatures must go through a severe discipline, and fiery salvation in the very suburbs of hell, before they can be perfectly purified. But our opponents have found out a way to deliver *half-hearted* believers out of all fear in this respect. Such believers need not *utterly abolish the body of sin* in this world. The inbred man of sin not only *may*, but he *shall* live as long as we do. You will possibly ask: "What is to become of this sinful guest? Shall he take us to hell, or shall we take him to heaven? If he cannot die in this world, will Christ destroy him in the next?" No: here Christ is almost left out of the question by those who pretend to be determined to know nothing but Christ and him crucified. Our indwelling adversary is not destroyed by the brightness of the Redeemer's spiritual appearing, but by the gloom of the appearance of Death. Thus they have found another Jesuſ—another Saviour from sin. The king of terrors comes to the assistance of Jesus's sanctifying grace and instantaneously delivers the carnal believer from indwelling pride, unbelief, covetousness, peevishness, uncharitableness,

ness, love of the world, and inordinate affection. Thus the clammy sweats brought on by the greedy monster, kill (it seems) the tree of sin, of which the blood of Christ could only kill the buds ! The dying sinner's breath does the capital work of the Spirit of holiness ! And by the most astonishing of all miracles the faint, infectious, last gasp of a sinful believer's blow away in the twinkling of an eye the great mountain of inward corruption, which all the means of grace, all the faith, prayers, and sacraments of twenty, perhaps of forty years ; with all the love in the heart of our Zerubbabel, all the blood in his veins, all the power in his hands, and all the faithfulness in his breast, were never able to remove ! If this doctrine is true, how greatly was St. Paul mistaken when he said, *The sting of Death is sin, &c. Thanks be to God, who giveth us the victory through Christ our Lord !* Should he not have said, *Death is the cure of sin, instead of saying, sin is the sting of Death ?* And should not his praises flow thus, *Thanks be to God, who giveth us the victory through Death ?* our great and only Deliverer from our greatest and fiercest enemy, *indwelling sin !*

S E C T I O N XIV.

An Answer to the Arguments by which the Imperfectionists support the doctrine of the necessary indwelling of sin in all believers till they go into the Death-purgatory.

THE pleasing effect of the lights in a picture, is considerably heightened by the bold opposition of strong shades. If the preceding arguments are the lights, by which we hope agreeably to strike the mental eyes of the reader, who candidly considers the doctrine of christian perfection ; it will not

not be improper to heighten those lights by the amazing contrast of the arguments, which our opponents advance in defence of *indwelling sin*, and *christian imperfection*. These arguments appear to us, *shades*,—*bold*, logical shades: but the *bolder* they are, the more they will set off the lustre of the truth which we recommend: for, if *all things work for good to them that love God*; why should not all the errors of others, work for good to them that love the truth? I am abundantly furnished with the erroneous shades I want, by three of the most approved authors, who support the ark of the imperfect gospel, the Rev. Mr. *Toplady*, author of the *Historic Proof of Calvinism*:—the Rev. Mr. *Martin*, author of several tracts, which are esteemed by the Calvinists;—and the Rev. Mr. *Henry*, famous for his voluminous exposition of the Bible.

The first of these authors, in his *Caveat against unfound doctrine*, intimates that there never were on earth but three persons possessed of the sinless perfection which we contend for; *Adam*, *Eve*, and *Jesus Christ*:—A bold intimation this, which, like the *Babel*, I attack, has its foundation in *Confusion*:—in the confusion of three perfections which are entirely different;—the *paradisaical*, sinless *perfection* of our parents: the *mediatorial*, sinless *perfection* of Jesus Christ;—and the *christian evangelically sinless perfection* of St. John. This intimation is supported by some passages from *Solomon*, which have been already considered in Sect. XI. and by the following Argument.

Argument I. “A person of the amplest fortune cannot help the harbouring of snakes, toads, &c. on his lands; but they will breed, and nestle, and crawl about his estate whether he will or no. All he can do is to pursue and kill them whenever they make their appearance: yet let him be ever so vigilant, and diligent, there will always be a succession of those creatures, to exercise his patience,

and

and engage his industry. So it is with the true believer, in respect of indwelling sin." *Caveat against unsound doctrine*, page 54. To this we answer:

(1) From the clause which I produce in capitals in this argument, one would think that *patience* and *industry* cannot be properly exercised without indwelling sin. If so, does it not follow, that our Lord's *patience* and *industry* always wanted proper exercise, because he was always perfectly free from indwelling sin? We are of a different sentiment with respect to our Lord's christian virtues: and we apprehend, that the *patience* and *industry* of the most perfect believer, will always (without the opposition of indwelling sin) find full exercise in doing and suffering the whole will of God; in keeping the body under; in striving against the sin of others: in testifying by word and deed that the works of the world are evil; in resisting the numberless temptations of him, who goes about as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour; and in preparing to conflict with the king of terrors.

(2) Why could not assiduous vigilance clear an estate of *snakes*, as one of our kings cleared Great-Britain of *wolves*? Did he not attempt and accomplish what appeared impossible to less resolute minds? Mr. *Toplady* is too well acquainted with the classics not to know what the heathens themselves have said of *industry* and *love*:

Omnia vincit amor.—Labor improbus omnia vincit.

If "Love and incessant labour overcome the greatest difficulties," what cannot a diligent believer do, who is animated by the love of God, and feels that he can do all things through Christ who strengtheneth him?

(3) But the capital flaw of Mr. *Toplady*'s argument consists in so considering the weakness of free-will, as entirely to leave God and the sanctifying power of his Spirit out of the question. That gentleman forgets, that, for this purpose the Son of God

[who is Lord God omnipotent] was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil. Nor does he consider, that a worm afflicted by Omnipotence itself, is capable of the greatest achievements. Of this we have an illustrious instance in Moses, with respect to the removal of the lice, the frogs, and the locusts. Moses intreated the Lord, and the Lord turned a mighty, strong west wind, which took away the locusts, and cast them into the red sea : there remained not one locust in all the coasts of Egypt, Exodus x. 19. If Mr. Toplady had not forgot the mighty God, with whom Moses and believers have to do, he would never have supposed, that the comparison holds good between Christ cleansing the thoughts and heart of a praying believer by the inspiration of his holy spirit, and a man who can by no means destroy the snakes and toads that breed, nestle, and crawl about his estate.

(4) The Reverend Author of the *Caveat* sinks in this argument, even below the doctrine of heathen moralists. For, suppose the extirpation of a vicious habit were considered, would not a heathen be inexcusable, if he overlooked the succour and inspiration of the Almighty ? And what shall we say of a gospel minister, who writing upon the destruction of sin, entirely overlooks what at other times he calls the *sovereign, matchless, all-conquering, irresistible* power of divine grace, which (if we believe him) is absolutely to do all *in us and for us*?—who insinuates, that the *toad, pride, and the viper, envy*, must continue to nestle and crawl in our breasts for want of ability to destroy them; and who concludes that the extirpation of sin is impossible, because we cannot bring it about by our own strength? Just as if the power of God, which *helps our infirmities*, did not deserve a thought ! Who does not see, that when a divine argues in this manner, he puts his bushel upon the light of Christ's *victorious grace*, hides this sin-killing and heart-cleansing

light

light, and then absurdly concludes that the darkness of sin *must necessarily* remain in all believers? Thus, if I mistake not, it appears, that Mr. Toplady's argument in favour of the death-purgatory, is contrary to history, experience, and *gentilism*: and how much more to *christianity*, and to the honour of him who *to the uttermost saves his believing people from their heart-toads and bosom-vipers*, when they go to him for this great salvation!

The next author who shall furnish me with logical shades, is the ingenious and Rev. Mr. Martin, who has just published a plea for the necessary indwelling of sin in all believers. He calls it, "The Christian's peculiar conflict, An Essay on Galatians, v. 17." And from it I extract the arguments which follow.

Argument II. Page 15, &c. "O ye vain boasters of inherent perfection, say, Where is the man among you to be found, who always doth the things that he would? If there be one, who has this pre-eminence above his brethren, why should his name be concealed? Is he a preacher? and dare he assert he has at all times that discovery of the truth to his own soul he could wish, &c. Is he a private christian? and will he venture to declare, that in every character he sustains, &c. he continually acts not only the conscientious part, but in every respect fulfils the desire of his mind? What! does he hesitate? Is he afraid to attest this in the presence of a heart-searching God? How deceitful then is his confidence! &c. Strange infatuation! If he cannot at all times do the things, the good things that he would, can he suppose his best desires are more extensive than that law which is exceeding broad? &c. If he can be so vain as to suppose this, there is more hope of a fool than of him who is so wise in his own conceit. If he disowns the inference, and yet maintains his pre-

mises, that he is perfect, i. e. he is without sin, he has ceased to commit iniquity, what is the conclusion? I am obliged to conclude, that perfection and imperfection, things as contrary to each other as light and darkness, are with such a deluded person considered as one and the same thing."

This argument stript of its rhetorical ornaments, and put into a plain, logical dress, runs thus:

"When Christians do not do all the good things which they *desire* to do, they sin, or break God's law, which is purer and broader than their *desires*:—But the best ministers, and the best private christians do not do all the good things which they *desire* to do:—And therefore the best ministers, and the best private christians *sin*, and their sinless perfection is an empty boast." We may bring the argument into a still narrower compass, thus: "All *short-comings* are sinful, and therefore inconsistent with every kind of perfection." Now this proposition, which is the basis of the whole argument, has error for its foundation. Granting that *short-comings* are inconsistent with the absolute will of God, and with the perfection of his boundless power, I affirm four things, each of which, if I mistake not, overturns our objector's argument.

(1) The separate *spirits of just men made perfect* are *perfectly sinless*; nevertheless they *do not do all the things that they would*; for they have not yet prevailed to get the blood of God's martyrs avenged:—a display of justice this, which they ardently *wish* for. And I prove it by these words of St. John; *I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge, and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth!* Rev. vi. 9. Had they done what they *wished*, i. e. actually prevailed with God, their prayer would have *have* immediately turned into praises, and persecutors would long ago have been rooted out from the earth.

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(2) For want of infinite wisdom, does not perfect love in finite creatures frequently desire to do more for its object than it can? When Michael fought with the Dragon, is it not highly probable that he lovingly desired to hinder his cruel adversary from doing any farther mischief? But did not his performance fall short of his pious, resigned desire?—May not this be said also of the guardian care of the angels who minister to the heirs of salvation? Do these loving spirits afford us all the help, or procure us all the bliss, which their tender compassion prompts them to wish us?—If not; is it not absurd to suppose, that, barely on this account, they are sinfully imperfect? Nay, would it not be a high degree of rashness and injustice to insinuate, that they are transgressors of God's spiritual law; and that his commandment, which is broader than their desires, is broken by their not doing us all the good, which they desire to do us, and which they would actually do us, if a wise Providence had not set bounds to their commission? Does not this unscriptural, Calvinian legality put the stamp of sinfulness upon all angels and archangels, merely to keep in countenance the Antinomian doctrine of the necessary sinfulness of all believers?

(3) If we consider our Lord himself as a man, did he do all the good he would while he was upon earth? Did he preach as successfully as his perfect love made him desire to do? If he had all the success he desired in his ministry, why did he look round upon his hearers with anger; being grieved for the hardness of their hearts? Why did he weep and complain, How often would I have gathered you, &c. and ye would not?—Were even his private instructions so much blessed to his own disciples, as he could have wished? If they were, what meant these strange exhortations, How is it, that ye have no faith!—Faithless generation, how long shall I be with you?—Hast thou been so long with me, Philip,

and yet hast thou not known me?—Will ye also go away?

Nay, had not Christ his innocent infirmities too? Did he not shudder at the prospect of the cup of trembling! Needed he not the strengthening support of an angel in the garden of Gethsemane? Did he not offer up prayers, with strong cryings and tears, unto him that was able to save him from death? Was he not heard in that he feared? Heb. v. 7.—Did he not innocently cry out upon the cross, *My God! My God! Why hast thou forsaken me?* And does not the Apostle observe, that, *We have not an High Priest, who cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities: but [one who] was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin?* Heb. iv. 5. When our opponents therefore, confound *sin* with natural, innocent infirmities, or with our not doing all the good we would, do they not inadvertently fix a blot upon the immaculate character of Him who could say; *Which of you convinceth me of sin?*

(4) My pious opponent wishes, no doubt, to praise God as perfectly as an *angel*; whilst an *angel* probably desires to do it as completely as an *archangel*: but in the nature of things this cannot be. Thousands of God's moral vessels, which are *perfect* in their place and degree, and as such adorn God's universal temple, fall short of each other's perfection, without being *sinfully imperfect* on that account. When *deficiencies* are natural, and not moral, if we call them *sin*, in many cases we charge God with the *creation of sin*. Nor is it any more sin in a *man*, not to magnify God so vigorously as an *angel*, or in an *angel* not to serve his Creator so perfectly as an *archangel*; than it is a sin in a good *soldier*, not to do the king such excellent service as an experienced *captain*, or a consummate *general*. In the moral world, as well as in the natural, one *star* may differ from another *star in glory*, without the least disparagement to its peculiar perfection. The injudicious refinements of Calvinism make a confused

fused jumble of God's works, as they do of God's truths, and of the various perfections which belong to the various classes of his children : but a wise dispenser of the word will do by those various truths and perfections as Joseph did by his brothers: *he placed them, the first-born according to his birth-right (or superiority) and the youngest according to his youth (or inferiority.)*

(5) We are not ashamed to assert, that *perfection* in one respect, and *imperfection* in another respect, may consistently meet in the same subject; or, that men and things may be *perfect* in one sense and *imperfect* in another. If our opponents ridicule us for it, we will present them with an ocular, and by no means "metaphysical" demonstration of their mistake. Two *perfect* grains, the one of *barley*, and the other of *wheat*, lie before us. I say with the perfectionists, that the grain of barley is *perfect* in its kind; but *imperfect*, or inferior in excellence when it is compared to the grain of wheat. But Mr. Martin, at the head of the Imperfectionists, thinks me deluded, and placing himself in his judgment-seat, gravely says, "I am obliged to conclude that *perfection* and *imperfection*, things as contrary to each other as light and darkness, are with such a deluded person considered as one and the same."—"Some are so unaccountably absurd and ridiculous."—Reader, thou art Judge and Jury. Pronounce which of the two deserve best this imputation of "unaccountable absurdity," the author of this *Essay*, or that of the *Essay, on Gal. v. 17.*

(6) With respect to this gentleman's triumphant question, "*Where is the (perfect) man?—Why should his name be concealed?*" I hope it has already been satisfactorily answered in Sect. IV. Arg. XII. To what is advanced there, I add here the following remark. Inveterate prejudice is blind. If it believe not Reason, Moses, the Prophets, and the Apostles, neither would it be persuaded though one rose from

from the dead. And were we to point at a person as perfect as Jesus of Nazareth, and to say, *Behold the man,* I should not wonder if the prepossessed professors cried out, as some ancient engrossers of orthodoxy did, *He is a deceiver of the people, teaching perfection throughout all Jewry.* And if they did not say, *He is the friend of publicans and sinners, away with him;* it is not improbable they would say, *He is a friend of the Pharisees and Arminians, why do you hear him? Would ye also be his disciples?* It is in vain to hope, that prejudice expired with those who scoffed at *perfection incarnate,* and spit in the face of Jesus Christ; thinking to do God and the Messiah service. Man, is man, in London, as well as in Jerusalem. Our Author goes on :

Argument III. [Page 18.] ‘ It is not more essential to those who are partakers of the grace of God in truth, to desire this [the destruction of *sin*] than it is for every creature as such, to desire an exemption from *pain and shame.*’—Then follows a dangerous *insinuation,* that we must say by the cup of *indwelling sin,* as our Saviour did by the cup of *pain and shame;* “ *The cup that my Father giveth me, shall I not drink it?* ”

Answer. Never was a cup of subtle poison more artfully mixed! And that the reader may not suspect any mischief, the author borrows the very cup which our heavenly Father presented to Christ in the garden of Gethsemane; a cup of *pain and shame.* Reader examine this cup before thou drink it. Death is in it. Pour out the new wine which makes the poison it contains palatable, and at the bottom thou wilt find this mortal sediment. “ It is as absurd absolutely to desire deliverance from *sin* in this life, as absolutely to desire deliverance from *pain and shame.* ” To discover the falsehood of this proposition we need only weigh the following remarks. (1) Man mixed for himself

self the *moral cup of sin*, and God [to punish him] mixed the *natural cup of pain and shame*.—(2) It is excessively wrong so to confound *moral* and *natural* evil in this life, we ought not absolutely to ask and expect deliverance from *all moral* evil before death.—(3) When the Imperfectionists confound the *moral cup of sin*, with the *natural cup of shame and pain*, they are as grossly mistaken, as if they confounded poison, and counter-poison—*sin*, and its punishment—the murderer's revengeful heart, and the gallows on which he is hanged.—(4) *Shame and pain* when they are appointed for the trial of faith, and endured for righteousness sake, compose the last and greatest of all the beatitudes; a beatitude this, of which our Lord drank so deeply, when *for the joy that was set before him, he endured the pain, and despised the shame of the cross*, Heb. xii. 2. But where was *indwelling sin* ever ranked among the ingredients which compose the *beatitudes*, that our opponents should thus confound it with *pain and shame*?—(5) When they insinuate, that we must bear with *sin* as patiently as with *pain and shame*, the *moral cup of indwelling iniquity*, as readily as the *natural cup of outward affliction*, do they not grossly confound the *cup of devils* with the *cup of the Lord*, and make the simple believe, that, because we must patiently drink the latter with Christ, we must also patiently drink the former with Belial?—The Captain of our salvation bids us *rejoice and be exceeding glad*, when we patiently suffer pain and shame for righteousness sake; therefore, absolutely to deprecate all *pain and shame* would be to pray against our *exceedingly great joy*, yea against our *reigning with Christ*: for, *if we suffer, we shall also reign with him*. But where does Christ bid us *rejoice and be exceeding glad* when we are full of indwelling *sin*? Or where does he promise that *if we harbour indwelling sin, we shall also reign with him*?—Christians, awake! We pour out this rank poison before you, that you may advert to its offensive

fensive smell : while rash Solifidians gather it up, as if it were the honey of Canaan ; boldly trample it under foot, and be ye more and more persuaded, that righteousness *calvinistically imputed*, and *indwelling sin*, are the two arms in which the *Deliah* of the Imperfectionists clasps her deluded admirers.

Page 31. Our ingenious author proposes an important question. " *If the grace of God, says he, be so abundant as the scriptures represent it, and the scripture cannot be broken; why are believers permitted to struggle so long for that victory they cannot yet obtain?*" [that victory which death is to bring them?] — " *Whence is it that they, who pant for purity, should not immediately obtain a request so desirable?*" — For our author lays it down as an undoubted truth, that " *Flesh and spirit mutually lust, desire and strive to obtain a complete conquest, but at present, [i. e. in this life] neither can prevail.*" Page 26.

This important question we answer thus. Imperfect christians do not attain perfect purity of heart :—(1) Because they do not see the need of it : —because they still hug some accursed thing, or because the burden of *indwelling sin* is not yet become intolerable to them. They make shift to bear it yet, as they do the tooth-ach, when they are still loath to have a rotten tooth pulled out.—(2) If they are truly willing to be made clean, they do not yet believe that the Lord both *can* and *will* make them clean ; or that *now is the day of this salvation*. And, as faith inherits the promises of God, it is no wonder if their unbelief misses this portion of their inheritance.—(3) If they have some *faith* in the promise that the Lord *can*, and *will circumcise their hearts, that they may love him with all their hearts*; yet it is not that kind or degree of *faith*, which makes them completely willing to sell all, to deny themselves, faithfully to use their *inferior talent*, and to continue instant in prayer for this very

very blessing. In short, they have not, because they ask not, which is the case of the Laodicean imperfectionists; or because they ask amiss, which is the case of the imperfect perfectionists.—(4) Frequently also they will receive God's blessing in their own preconceived method, and not in God's appointed way. Hence God suspends the operation of his sanctifying spirit, till they humbly confess their obstinacy and false wisdom, as well as their unbelief and want of perfect love. Thus we clear our *Sanctifier*, and take the shame of our impurity to ourselves. Not so our opponents. They exculpate themselves, and insinuate, that God has appointed the necessary continuance of indwelling sin in us for life, that the conflict which we maintain with that enemy may answer excellent ends. Their arguments collected in the above-quoted *Essay*, are produced and answered in the following pages.

Argument IV. Page 37, &c. “*By this warfare the Lord manifests and magnifies himself to his people; and, if I am not mistaken, &c. the continuance of it is a mean by which believers have such views of the perfections and glory of God, as do not seem to us probable they could here obtain without it.*”—Then our author instances in God’s “unchanging love towards the elect,” and in his sovereign grace—that reigns through righteousness to the salvation of the guilty.”—He next observes, that Those believers who are most conscious of this internal conflict—most sensible of the power and prevalence of indwelling sin—are most thankful that the endearing declarations of God’s distinguishing love are true.—And [page 39, 40,] we are distinctly told, that the doctrine of the necessary continuance of indwelling sin magnifies “the power and patience of God: the power of God to support us under this conflict, and his patience in bearing with our manifold weakness and ingratitude.”—For, great as the burden of our ingratitude is, “yet He fainteth not, neither is he weary.”

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This is an extract of our author's argument, which, like a *snake*, works its way through verbose windings, where I have not leisure to follow it. Crush this *snake*, and out will come this less viper: the longer sin continues in us, the more God's sovereign love, grace, power, and patience, by which he saves guilty, weak, and ungrateful sinners is manifested to us.—Or, if you please, the longer we continue in sin, or the longer sin continues in us, the more is grace manifested and magnified.—Or, if you will speak as the apostolic controvrtist, Let us *continue in sin that grace may abound*.—A notion this, which is the very soul of antinomianism unmasked.

To fill the pious reader with a just detestation of this doctrine, I need only unfold it, thus. If the continuance of *indwelling sin* magnifies God's sovereign grace, and patience, in saving ungrateful sinners; the continuance of *outward sin* will do this much more: for, the greater our outward sins are, the greater will God's *patience* appear in bearing with us; and his *grace* in forgiving us; seeing "*he fainteth not, neither is he weary*." Thus we are come almost to the top of antinomianism; and, to reach the highest step of the fatal ladder, we need only declare, as the author of the *five letters* has done, that *a grievous fall* [into sin, which he has instanced in adultery, robbery, murder, and incest] *will make us sing louder to the praise of restoring grace throughout all the ages of eternity*. [See the fourth of those letters.] Now if *a grievous fall* will infallibly have that-happy effect, it follows that ten such falls will multiply ten times the display of God's *power* and *patience*. What a boundless field opens here, to run an antinomian race, and to enlarge our *wickedness as hell*! What a ladder is here lent us to descend to the depth of the abomination of desolation, in order to reach the loudest notes of praise in heaven! If this Solifidian gospel is not one of the depths of *Satan*, and the greatest too, I am not capable

capable of discerning midnight gloom from noon-day brightness.

Argument V. Page 41. “To save the guilty in such a manner as, &c. effectually to humble them who are saved, displays the manifold wisdom of God.—Does it not seem necessary to attain that great end, to make believers experimentally know what an evil and bitter thing sin is, &c. If so, when can the objects of salvation see this with becoming shame and sorrow? Not while they are *in the gall of bitterness*, &c. for in that state, *so abominable is man, that he drinketh in iniquity like water*.—On the other hand, this cannot be after they are brought to glory. For then, all the painful and shameful memorials of sin will be finally removed.—It must be while flesh and spirit dwell in the same man.”

Granted: but what has this argument to do with the question? Did we ever deny, that, as long as we live, we must repent, or be deeply conscious *what an evil and bitter thing sin is?* The question is, whether *indwelling sin* is an incentive to true repentance; and whether God has appointed that this supposed incentive should remain in our hearts till death, lest we should forget “*what an evil and bitter thing sin is,*” or lest we should not remember it “*with becoming shame and sorrow?*” The absurdity of this plea has already been exposed in Sect. III. Obj. viii. and ix. And, to the arguments there advanced, I now add those which follow.—(1) Does not experience convince imperfect believers, that the more fretfulness, self-will, and obstinacy they have in their hearts, the less they do repent? How absurd is it then to suppose that the remains of these evil dispositions will help them to feel “*becoming shame and sorrow*” for sin!—(2) Do not our opponents tell their hearers, that we get more becoming shame and sorrow by *looking one moment*

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at him whom we have pierced, than by poring upon our corruptions for an hour? If so, why will they plead for indwelling sin, that "becoming shame and sorrow" may abound? And why do they pretend, that they exalt Christ more than we, who maintain that our most becoming shame and deepest sorrow flow from his ignominy and sufferings, and not from our indwelling sin and conflicting corruptions?—Did not Job *abhor himself and repent in dust and ashes*, when he saw his redeeming God by faith, much more than when he just kept his head above the bitter waters of impatience and murmuring?—(3) The pleaders for the continuance of indwelling sin tell us, "That, as the sight and attacks of a living and roaring lion, will make us dread lions more than all the descriptions and pictures which represent their destructive fierceness; so the feeling the onsets of *indwelling sin*, will make us abhor sin more than all the descriptions of its odious nature, and the accounts of its fearful consequences: because a burnt child naturally dreads the fire."—To this we answer: a burnt child, who pleads for the keeping of a burning coal upon his breast to make him dread the fire, has hitherto been burned to little purpose.—Who had ever less to do with *indwelling sin* and its cursed attacks, than the holy Jesus, and faithful angels? And yet, who is more filled with a perfect abhorrence of all iniquity? On the other hand, who has been more distracted, and longer torn by indwelling sin, than the devil? and who, nevertheless is better reconciled to it? Or who is more plagued by the continual rendings, and bitings of the lions and vipers *within*, than those passionate, revengeful people, who say with all the positiveness of *Jonah* and *Abdalom*, *I do well to be angry, and Revenge is sweet?* Experience therefore demonstrates the inconclusiveness of this argument.—(4) If the penitent thief properly learned in a few hours, *what an evil and bitter thing external and internal sin is*; is it not absurd to suppose, that he must

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must have continued forty years full of indwelling sin to learn that lesson, if God had added forty years to his life? Would this delay have been to the honour of his divine Teacher?—Lastly, when Christ cast seven devils out of *Mary Magdalén*, did he leave one or two devils behind, to teach her “*becoming shame and sorrow*” for sin? And was it these two remaining “*Diabolonians*,” that made her dissolve in tears at Christ’s feet; or the grave-ful, penitential love which she felt for her gracious deliverer?—Is it not astonishing, that *gospel ministers* should so far forget themselves and their Saviour, as to teach [as openly as for decency they dare] that we must fetch our tears of godly sorrow from the infernal lake, and rekindle the candle of repentance at the fire of hell! and that the fanning breath of the spirit, and the golden, hallowed snuffers of the sanctuary cannot make that candle burn continually clear, unless we use to the end of our life, the black finger of Satan, *indwelling sin*; and Adam’s accursed extinguisher, *original corruption*!

Argument VI. Our author’s next argument in favour of the *necessary* indwelling of sin during life, is more decent, and consequently more dangerous. The cloven feet of error delicately wear the sandals of truth: but with a little attention we shall soon see, that they are only borrowed or stolen. The argument abridged from page 44, and rendered more perspicuous, may run thus.—“ If we have frequently been slothful, and have not at all times exerted our abilities to the uttermost; why may not God in wisdom rebuke us for it, and make us sensible of that evil, by not permitting us to effect what at other times we seem determined (if possible) to accomplish;” [that is, by not permitting us utterly to abolish the whole body of sin.]—“ If Sampson abuse his strength, it is fit he should have cause severely to reflect on his folly, by being deprived of it for a season, and become-

as weak as other men." Here we are left to infer, that as Sampson, through his unfaithfulness, became *as weak as other men* for a season; so all believers, on account of their unfaithfulness, must be weakened by indwelling sin, during the term of life.

To this we answer, (1) That although believers frequently give place to sloth and unfaithfulness, yet they are no more necessitated to do it, than Sampson was to dally with Delilah.—(2) If the constant indwelling of sin is a just punishment for not making a proper use of the talent of grace which God gives us, it evidently follows, that *our unfaithfulness*, and not a *necessity appointed by God*, is the very worm which destroys our evangelically-sinless perfection: and the moment our opponents grant this, they allow all that we contend for; unless they should be able to prove, that God *necessitates us to be unfaithful*, in order to *punish us infallibly with indwelling sin for life.*—

As for Sampson, he is most unfortunately brought in to support the doctrine of the *necessary* indwelling of that *weakening* sin, which we call *inbred corruption*: and he might be most happily produced to encourage those *unfaithful* believers, who, like him, have not made a proper use of their strength in time past: for he outlived his penal weakness, and recovered the strength of a perfect Nazarite before death: witness his last achievement, which exceeded all his former exploits. For it would be highly absurd to suppose that he got in a *death-purgatory* the amazing strength by which he pulled down the pillars, that supported the large building where the Philistines feasted. Nor need I the strength of a logical Sampson, to break the argumentative reeds which support the temple of error, in which the imperfectionists make sport, to their hurt, with the doctrine of that christian Sampson, who said, *I can do all things through Christ that strengtheneth me.*

Argument

Argument VII. Page 47, &c. We are indirectly told [for pious men cannot utter gross antinomianism without the mask of circumlocution] that indwelling sin must continue in us, that "grace (may) not only be exercised, but distinguished from all that has only the appearance of it.—But—how is the true grace of God to be here distinguished from that which is but the semblance of it?—By its effects,—a clear and spiritual discovery of the—depravity, deceit and desperate wickedness of our own hearts."—And then we are given to understand, that, lest we should not be deeply convinced of that desperate wickedness, the continuance of indwelling sin is absolutely necessary. This argument runs into the fifth, which I have already answered. It is another indirect plea for the continuance of outward adultery and murder, as well as for the continuance of indwelling sin; it being certain that outward adultery, &c. will convince us of the desperate wickedness of our hearts, still more powerfully than heart-adultery, &c. To what hard shifts are good men put, when they fight for the continuance of the bud, or root of any sin! Their every stroke for sin is a stab at the very vitals of godliness.

Argument VIII. Page 48. The continuance of indwelling sin, which is (with great modesty in the ingenious author, and therefore with great danger to the unwary reader) called "*this warfare*," is supported by the following reason. "It is often an occasion to discover the strength of grace received, as well as the truth of it." This argument is all of a piece with the preceding, and puts me in mind of a speech, which a shameless, young debauchee made once to me. "I kept (said he) drinking and dozing in such a tavern, without ever going to bed, or being ever sober one hour for twenty-three days. I never had so remarkable an occasion to discover the strength of my body, and the excellence of my constitution."—However in a few months, while

he continued in the occasion to discover his strength, a mortal disorder seized upon him, and, by removing him into eternity, taught me, that if Fulsome, the professor, speaks the truth, when he says, *Once in grace always in grace*; *Nabal*, the sot, was mistaken, when he hinted, *Once in health always in health*. To make the Imperfectionists ashamed of this argument, I hope, I need only observe:—
 (1) That nothing ever shewed more the strength of grace than the conflicts which the man Christ Jesus went through, though he never conflicted a moment with *indwelling sin*:—(2) That the strength and excellence of a remedy, is much better discovered by the removal of the disorder which it is designed to cure, than by the *conflicts* which the poor patient has with pain, till death come to terminate his misery.—And (3) That the argument I refute, indirectly represents Christ as a physician, who keeps his patients upon the rack to render himself more necessary to them, and to show the strength of the anodyne mixture, by which he gives them now and then a little ease under their *continued, racking* pain.

Our author adds, page 49, “*If those who bear the heaviest burdens are sometimes esteemed the strongest men, they are those who are thus engaged in this warfare.*” I wish he would speak quite out, and say, They who bear the heaviest burden of *indwelling sin*) “have that evidence of the strength of grace, &c. which is peculiar to themselves.” A great mistake this: for, if we may believe Ovid when Medea murdered her own child, under a severe conflict with *indwelling sin*, she had that fatal evidence of what is here preposterously called the strength of grace; but what I beg leave to call, the obstinacy of free-will. Sed trahit invitam nova vis, &c. “*Pashon*, said she, *hurries away my unwilling, reluctant mind.*” Judas, it seems, was not an utter stranger to this conflict (any more than to the burden of guilt,) when he hurried out of it into a death-purgatory. Nor do I blame

I blame him for having chosen strangling rather than life, if death can terminate the misery which accompanies indwelling sin, and do more in that respect for fallen believers than Christ himself ever did. But, supposing that the saving grace of God, which has appeared to all men, never appeared to Medea and Judas:—supposing these two sinful souls never conflicted with indwelling sin, it will however follow from our author's insinuation, that, in case David had defiled half a dozen married women, and killed their husbands to enjoy them without a rival, we should esteem him six times stronger in grace, if he had not fainted under his six-fold burden, like Judas; because “*in this [Antinomian] warfare, those who bear the heaviest burdens are esteemed the strongest*” believers; and because “*they have that testimony of their love to Christ, which is peculiar to themselves.*” If Satan was to transform himself into an angel of light, could he preach a more dangerous and immoral gospel to an Antinomian and perverse generation?

Argument IX.—Our author's last argument in favour of the necessary continuance of sin in us, occurs page 51, and runs thus:—“I will only add, that by this warfare, the Lord weans his people from the present evil world, and makes them long for the land of promise, as the land of rest, &c. I know some will say, This is impossible; and be ready to ask, *Are we then debtors to the flesh?*”—(A very proper question! which the author answers thus:) “*By no means, &c. In our flesh dwells no good thing, &c. Nevertheless—he [God] can and does make the presence of evil so irksome to the believer, that it makes him ardently long for complete deliverance from it.*”—That is, in plain English, he keeps his patients so long upon the rack of their indwelling sin, that at last they are forced to long for Death, the great cleanser from heart-iniquity. This argument would have been complete, if it had been supported by these

these two passages, *I do well to be angry even unto death* :—*In those days, men [plagued by the locusts which ascend out of the bottomless pit] shall desire to die, and death shall flee from them.* To show its absurdity I need only make two or three remarks upon it.

(1) Mark the inconsistency of our opponents. When they hear us press obedient faith upon a fallen or wavering believer, by mentioning to him the terrors of the Lord, the fear of losing the divine favour, and the danger of being even spewed out of Christ's mouth, and condemned without mercy, if they show no mercy; they say that enforcing the *love of Christ* on a disobedient believer, will abundantly answer all the good ends which we propose by thus preaching Christ's law: but, when they plead for the continuance of sin, they forget their own doctrine, and tell us that *indwelling sin* is necessary to keep us in the way of duty, namely, in an ardent longing for heaven. They blame us for making use of Christ's law to spur believers: and yet they, (See to what astonishing height their partiality is grown!) they do not blush to preach openly the law of sin to believers; insisting that its working in their members is necessary to “make them long for the land of promise as the land of rest—and for the speedy possession of that great good, which God has laid up for them:” Page 52!—We are heretics for preaching the law of Christ, the law of liberty! they, who preach the law of sin, the law of bondage, are orthodox, and engross to themselves the glorious title of gospel-ministers!

(2) How absurd is it to prop up the throne of *indwelling sin* in the heart of believers, that its tyrannical law may make them long for heaven! Did not Christ long for heaven without indwelling sin? Do not the holiest believers, who are most free from indwelling sin, long most for the beatific vision? And do we not see that fallen believers, who are most

most filled with *indwelling sin*, are most apt to be *lovers of sin*, and *the world*, more than *lovers of God* and *heaven*? Are they not the very people, who, unmindful of Lot's wife, stay in the plain: instead of escaping for their life, and fleeing to the celestial mount of God without ever looking behind them?

(3) Is not *indwelling sin* a clog, rather than a spur to the heavenly racers? If sin is of such service to us, to make us run the career of holy longing after heavenly rest, why does the Apostle exhort us to *set aside every weight, and the sin which does so easily beset us?* If we want a spur to make us mend our pace; need we keep the spur, *indwelling sin*? Is it not more likely to spur us to hell than to heaven? If we have thousands of *sinless* spurs, what need have we of keeping That to drive us to heaven, which drove Adam behind the trees of the garden; not to say, out of his native paradise?

If you ask, What are the *sinless* spurs of believers? We reply, all the toils, infirmities, and pains of our weary, decaying, mortal bodies:—All the troubles, disappointments, and sorrows, which arise as naturally out of our present circumstances, as sparks do out of the fire:—A share of the dreadful temptations which harassed Christ in the wilderness: and frequent tastes of the bitter cup which made him sweat blood in the garden, and cry out on Calvary.—Hear one, to whom our opponents absurdly give the spur of *indwelling sin*, as if he had not spurring enough without it: *I fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh*; Col. i. 24. And surely *indwelling sin* was never one of Christ's afflictions.—Again, *Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?* Shall it be tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written, *For thy sake we are killed all the day long: we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.*—Once more: some were tortured, not accepting deliverance, and others had trials of cruel mockings

mockings and scourgings, yea moreover of bonds and imprisonment. They were stoned, they were fawn aunder, were tempted, were slain with the fword: they wandered about in sheep-skins, and goat skins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented; they wandered in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth.

I grant that all true believers have not these thorns in the flesh, and feel not the spurs which made Elijah flee for his life before incensed Jezebel, and request that he might die under the juniper-tree: but, at the best of times, they have, or should have David's affliction, *My eyes run down with water because men keep not thy law:*—They have, or should have Jeremiah's grief, *O that my head were waters, and mine eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night, for the desolation of Jerusalem, or for the slain of the daughter of God's people!*—They have, or should have the sorrow of just Lot, who was vexed from day to day with the filthy conversation of the wicked among whom he dwelt. To suppose therefore, that in this vale of tears, tribulation, and sin, we need keep the sting of indwelling sin, because we must strive against the sin which is in the world to the end, even unto blood, if we are called to secure the crown of martyrdom;—or because it “*is the will of God, that through much tribulation we should enter the kingdom:*” [page 46,] and because we should long for heaven:—to suppose, I say, that we must keep the sting, indwelling sin on these accounts, is as absurd as to suppose, that all the keepers and nurses in *Bedlam* must be mad, and must continue to be plagued with personal lunacy, lest they should not strive against madness to the end:—lest they should not come out of great disturbances when they remove from their dreary habitation;—and lest, while they continue there, they should not fee mad people enough to make them long for the conversation of reasonable persons.

Argument X. Page 52. Our author closes his shrewd plea for the Death-purgatory, by proposing a very material objection: "If any exclaim and say, These sentiments have a tendency to reconcile believers to sin; I must say,—The flesh might as soon be reconciled to the spirit, as the spirit to the flesh: or sin to grace, as grace to sin. It is often said, That nature will be nature. And why may not this be applied to the divine nature,—of which believers are said to be partakers?" Hence our author insinuates, that the divine nature of believers is "immutable;" and that, because *to will is present with them*, when they sin they still retain God's holiness, as "lions and tigers, however confined or careffed, retain their ferocity and brutal appetites."

I am glad to see that this pious author has still the cause of holiness at heart, and desires to stop up the Antinomian gap. I am persuaded that he intends to do God service by pleading for the continuance of *indwelling sin*. If he asks for the reprieve of that robber and murderer, it is merely because Antinomianism has deceived him, as formerly pharisaism deceived the Jews who cried, *Release unto us Barabbas*. If he saw, that *Christ in us* must be crucified afresh, in case the *robber in us* is not put to death; I doubt not but he would be as sorry for his publication, as the devout Jews were for their antichristian request, when they were pricked to the heart on the day of pentecost.

But alas! if a good intention excuses bad performances, it does not stop their mischief. The very desire which our author evidences to secure godliness, is so unfortunately expressed, that it gives her as fatal a blow as the tempter did, when he said to our first parents, *Ye shall not surely die*. For, when that gentleman intimates to fallen believers, *Ye are possessed of the divine nature*; and, be your works what they will, if *to will be "in some degree present,"* (page 54) ye are as much possessed of God's holy

holy image, as a lion is possessed of a lion's fierce nature: what is this, but to preach the very gospel which the serpent preached in paradise; with this difference, that the serpent said, *Ye shall not die: Ye shall be as gods:* but the Imperfectionists say, Your salvation is finished; ye have already the “immutable nature” of God: *Ye are already as gods?*—Adam believed the tempter, and lost his holy nature. The Imperfectionists believe our author: Oh! may none of them remain “immutable” in the *sinful* imperfection which he so earnestly contends for!

XI. A Caveat. Having said so much upon our author's mistakes, I should be inexcusable if I did not drop a *caution* about the veil with which they are covered. His book goes into the world under the harmless title of “*The Christian's peculiar Conflict;*” whereas it should be called, *A Plea for the propriety and usefulness of the continuance of indwelling sin in all christians.* This plain, artless title would have made true christians stand upon their guard; but now they take up *without suspicion* the cup mixed by the author: and it is well if some have not already drank it to the dregs, *without fear.*

An illustration will give the reader an idea of the wisdom with which the title of this Essay is contrived.—I write a treatise full upon the advantage of a standing rebellion in the kingdom, and urge a variety of plausible arguments to show the great good that will arise from an inveterate opposition to the government. “If a spirit of rebellion ceases in any subject, the king's patience, mercy, love and power will not be so fully displayed, nor will the loyalty of his good subjects be so well distinguished and proved:—Rebellion, and the burdens that attend it, will make us long for peace:—Guilty, ungrateful rebels will love the king and admire his mercy the more when they are forgiven after their manifold rebellions. And therefore [to use

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use the unguarded words of our Author, page 53,] it becomes us seriously to consider, how far this great end [of a spirit of rebellion continually dwelling in every Briton's breast] is understood, approved, and answered."—I show my manuscript to a friend, who says: Your Essay will alarm every well-wisher to the constitution of the realm. But I remove his objection by saying, I will not call it "An Essay on the propriety and usefulness of a spirit of rebellion constantly harboured in the breast of every one of his Majesty's subjects :" but I will call it, "The loyal Subject's Conflict, An Essay on 1 Sam. xii. 19," and this plausible title will modestly make way for my boldest arguments. Pleas for the continuance of rebellion and *indwelling sin*, may properly enough be introduced by such a stratagem.

SECTION XV.

Mr. HILL objects that the doctrine of Christian perfection is POPISH; and the Author shews, that it is truly evangelical, and stands inseparably connected with the cordial obedience required by the mediatorial laws of Moses and Christ; insomuch that there is absolutely no medium between the doctrine of an evangelically-sinless perfection, and lawless Antinomianism.—This section contains a recapitulation of the scripture proofs of the doctrine maintained in these sheets; and therefore the careful perusal of it is humbly recommended to the Reader.

HAVING taken my leave of the ingenious Author of *The Christian's peculiar conflict*, I return to Mr. Hill, who, by this time meets me with his *Review* in his hand, and with that theological sling casts at our doctrine a stone which has indeed frightened thousands of weak souls, but has

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never done any execution amongst the judicious. Your doctrine, says he, "is a Popish doctrine;" and he might have added with as much reason, that it is a Pelagian doctrine too: for bold as *Pelagius* and some *Popes* have been in coining new doctrines, they never came to such a pitch of boldness, as to say that they were the authors of the doctrine of evangelical obedience, and of those commandments, which bind us to love God—our covenant-God, with all our heart, and our neighbour as ourselves; precious gospel-commandments these, upon which the doctrine of perfection securely rests!

What *Pope* was ever silly enough to pretend that he wrote the book of Deuteronomy, where we find this sweet evangelical law, *Hear, O Israel: Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might.* And these words which I command thee this day, shall be in thy heart—[to do them, I suppose, and not to ridicule them under the names of *perfection* and *popery?*] Deut. vi. 5. 9. Now by what argument will Mr. *Hill* prove that the *Pope* is the inventor of this blessed doctrine?

Should that gentleman reply, that when God gave his ancient people this gracious law of perfection, he did not give it with an intention that they should personally keep it as an evangelical law; but only with an intention to drive them to the promised Messiah, who was to keep it for them, and to give eternal indulgences to all the believers who break it; we demand a proof; and till Mr. *Hill* produces it, we show his mistake by the following arguments. (1) Although the *jewish dispensation* revealed a *gracious God, abundant in goodness, mercy, and truth, forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin* to returning sinners, who penitentially laid hold on his *jewish covenant*; yet, if I remember right, it never promised to accept of an obedience performed by another. Hence it is, that God never commanded that *jewish females* should be circumcised;

cised; but confined his ordinance to the males, who alone could personally obey it. We frequently read of vicarious suffering in the Jewish gospel, but not of vicarious obedience, and vicarious love. For although the obedience of godly parents engaged God to bestow many blessings upon their children; yet the children were to obey for themselves, or to be cut off in the end. The Jews were undone by a conceit of the contrary doctrine, and by wild notions about the obedience of Abraham, and the holiness of the temple, which they fancied was imputed to them in the Calvinian way: and a similar mistake, it is to be feared, undoes still, multitudes of Christians, who fatally mistake the Christian obedience, absurdly put on robes of self-imputed righteousness, and rashly bespatter the robes of personal, and evangelically-perfect obedience, which God requires of every one of us.

(2) The mistake I expose would never have been made by our opponents, if they had not used themselves to tear the evangelically-legal part of the scriptures from the context, in order to give it a sense contrary to that of the sacred writers; it being certain that when you have torn a man's tongue out of his mouth, you may afterwards force it down his throat, and leave it there with the root against his teeth, and the tip towards his stomach. To show that the precept of perfect love, which I have quoted from Deut. vi. is treated in this manner, as often as our opponents insinuate, God did not intend, that Jewish believers should personally observe it as a term of final acceptance, but only that they should be driven thereby to the Mediator, who should perfectly love God for them:—To show, I say, the absurdity of this notion, we need only do Moses the justice to hear him out. Let any unprejudiced person read the whole chapter, and he will, I am persuaded, side against the Calvinian imputation of a Jewish perfection to Jewish believers. Moses begins by saying,

ing, Now these are the commandments—which the Lord your God [yours through an evangelical covenant] commanded to teach you, that ye might do them, [and not that your Mediator might do them for you.] Deut. vi. 1. Two verses after, he adds, Hear, O Israel, and observe, and do, [Not hear, O Israel, and another shall observe and do for thee,] that it may be well with thee. Then comes our capital doctrine and precept of perfect love, which, a few verses below, Moses continues to enforce thus: Ye shall not tempt the Lord your [covenant] God.— You shall diligently keep the [evangelical] commands of the Lord your [covenant] God; and his [gospel] testimonies, which he has commanded thee. And thou shalt do that which is right and good in the sight of the Lord thy God, that it may be well with thee.—And when thy son asketh thee, saying, What do mean these statutes [of perfect love, &c.] Then thou shalt say unto thy son, We were Pharaoh's bondmen in Egypt, and the Lord brought us out.—And, least Antinomian hands should draw the golden nail of this perfect obedience for want of proper clinching: this precious chapter, which our Church has properly selected for a Sunday-lesson, ends with these words, which must raise a blush on the face, or strike conviction into the breast, of all who trample under foot the robes of our own evangelical perfection; And the Lord commanded us to do all these statutes,—that he might preserve us alive:—and it shall be our righteousness [our gospel-perfection] if we observe to do all these commandments, before the Lord our [covenant] God, as he has commanded us, Deut. vi. 1—25.

If our opponents say, that this is a transcript of Adam's anti-mediatorial law of paradisiacal perfection; and not a copy of Moses's mediatorial law of Jewish perfection; or if they assert, that Moses calvinistically hints that the Jews were to keep this law by proxy, that they may say that light is darkness. And if they grant that Moses was no antinomian

mian shuffler, but really meant what he spoke and wrote, it unavoidably follows:—(1) That God really required of every Jew an evangelical and personal perfection of love, according to the degrees of light and power imparted under the Jewish dispensation: (2) That this evangelical, Jewish perfection of love was attainable by every sincere Jew; because whatever God requires of us in a covenant of grace, he graciously engages himself to help us to perform, if we believably and obediently embrace his promised assistance.—And (3) That if an evangelical perfection of love was attainable under the *jewish gospel* [for the gospel was preached to the Jews, as well as to us, although not so clearly, Heb. iv. 2.] it is absurd to deny, that the gospel of Christ requires less perfection, or makes less provision, that Christians may attain what their dispensation calls them to.

If Mr. Hill thinks that this inference is not just, I refer him to our Lord's declaration: *Think not that I am come to destroy the law and the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil:* first, by perfectly obeying myself the two great moral precepts of Moses and the Prophets; and next, by teaching and helping all my faithful disciples to do the same, Matt. v. 17. Should that gentleman object, to the latter part of this little comment, because it leaves no room for the Calvinian imputation of Christ's mediatorial perfection to fallen believers, who sleep in impenitency, under the guilt of adultery, covered by murder: we reply, that this part of our exposition, far from being forced, is highly agreeable to the text, when it is taken in connexion with the scope of our Lord's sermon, and with the context. For,

(1) All Christ's sermons, and especially that upon the Mount, inculcate the doctrine of *personal* perfection, and not the doctrine of *imputed* perfection. (2) The very chapter out of which this text is taken, ends with these words, *Be ye therefore perfect,*

perfect, even as your Father, which is in heaven, is perfect. And Mr. Hill, prejudiced as he is against our doctrine, is too candid to assert, that our Lord meant, “*Be ye perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect:*” “Now, he is perfect only by the Calvinian imputation of my righteousness: it is merely by imputation that he makes his sun to rise on the evil and on the good. And he sendeth only a calvinistically-imputed rain upon the just and upon the unjust. *Be ye therefore perfect only by the imputation of my perfect righteousness.*”

Mr. Hill’s mistake has not only no countenance from the distant part of the context, but it is flatly contrary to the words which immediately follow the controverted text. *For verily I say unto you* [that, far from being come to destroy the law and the prophets, that is, the spirituality and strictness of the moral part of the Jewish gospel] *till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law* [which pharisaic glosses have unnerved] *till all be fulfilled.* [And lest you should think, that I speak of your fulfilling this law by proxy and imputation, I add, *Whosoever shall break one of these commandments,* [which I am going to enforce upon you, as *my own mediatorial law*; though hitherto you have considered them only as *Moses’s mediatorial law*] *whosoever I say, shall break one of these least commandments, and* [by precept and example] *teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven:* [If he has any place among my people in my spiritual kingdom, it shall be only among my carnal babes, who are the least of my subjects.] *But whosoever shall do and teach them,* [the commandments whose spirituality I am going to assert] *the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven,* [he shall be an adult, perfect Christian in the kingdom of my grace here; and he shall receive a proportionable crown of righteousness, in the kingdom of my glory hereafter.] Matt. v. 18, 19.

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If I am not mistaken, it evidently follows from these plain words of Christ, (1) That he taught a personal *perfection*, and an *evangelically-sinless* *perfection* too:—(2) That this perfection consists in not breaking, by wilful omission, the *least* of the commandments which our Lord rescued both from the false glosses of Antinomian pharisees, who rested on the imputed righteousness of Abraham, saying, “*We have Abraham for our Father: we are the children of Abraham: we are perfect in Abraham: all our perfection is in Abraham: and from the no less false glosses of those absurdly-legal pharisees, who paid the tithe of anise, mint, and cummin with the greatest scrupulosity, whilst they secretly neglected mercy, truth, and the love of God.*—And (3) That the perfection which Christ enforced upon his disciples was not merely of the negative kind, but of the positive also; since it consisted both in *doing*, and in *teaching the least*, as well as the *greatest* of God’s commandments.

If you ask what are the *greatest* of these commandments, which Christ says his disciples must “*do and teach*,” if they will be *great*, or perfect in his kingdom and dispensation, St. Matthew answers, *One of the pharisees, who was a Lawyer, asked him a question, saying, Master, Which is the great commandment in the law,* (the name then given to the Jewish gospel which Moses preached:) *Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind: this is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it [in nature and importance] Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets,* Matt. xxii. 35. That is, Whatever Moses and the other prophets taught and promised, hangs on the nail of perfect love. All came from, all tended to perfect love under the Jewish dispensation: nor is my dispensation less holy and gracious. On the contrary, *what the law could not do in a manner sufficiently perfect*

perfect for my dispensation (for Jewish perfection is not the highest perfection at which man may arrive on earth) *God sending me into the world for the atonement and destruction of sin, has hereby abundantly condemned sin in the flesh, that the righteousness of the mediatorial law, which enjoins perfect love, might be abundantly fulfilled in the hearts of them that walk after the spirit of my gospel;* —a brighter gospel this, which transmits more direct and warmer beams from the Sun of Righteousness, and can raise the exquisitely-delicious fruit of perfect love to a greater perfection than the gospel which Moses preached. [Compare Rom. viii. 3, with Heb. iv. 2. See also an account of the superiority of Christ's gospel in the Scripture-scales, Sect. VI.]

Agreeably to this doctrine of perfection, our Lord said to the rich, young man, *If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments;—If thou wilt be perfect, follow me in the way of my commandment;—Love God with all thy heart, and thy neighbour as thyself:* for blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may enter through the gate into the city; and have right to the tree of life which is in the street of that city on either side of the pure river of the water of life.—*This do and thou shalt live eternally in heaven.* Bring forth fruit unto perfection, according to the talents of grace and power which thou art entrusted with, and thou shalt inherit eternal life:—thou shalt receive the reward of the inheritance:—thou shalt receive the crown of life, which the Lord has promised to them that love him, with the love which keepeth the commandments, and fulfillleth the royal law. Compare Matt. xix. 17. Luke x. 28. Rev. xxii. 2. 14. James i. 12, and Luke viii. 14.

On these, and the above-mentioned scriptures, we rest the truth and importance of the doctrine of perfection. Jewish perfection principally stands or falls with Deut. vi. and Matt. xxii. and Christian perfection,

perfection, with Matt. v. and xix. to which you may add the joint testimony of St. Paul and St. James. The former, whom our opponents absurdly make the captain of their imperfection, says to the judaizing Galatians, *Bear ye one another's burdens [a rare instance of perfect love!] and so fulfil the [mediatorial] law of Christ*, Gal. vi. 2.—Nor let Mr. Hill say, that the Apostle means, we should fulfil it by proxy; for St. Paul adds in the next verse but one, *Let every man prove his own work, and then, [with respect to that work] he shall have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another: for [with regard to personal, evangelical obedience] every man shall bear his own burden*:—a proverbial expression, which answers to this gospel-axiom, *Every man shall be judged according to his own works.*

St. Paul urges the same evangelical and lawful doctrine upon the Romans. *Love one another: for he that loveth another, hath fulfilled the law. For this, Thou shalt not commit adultery:—Thou shalt not covet; and if there be any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.—Love is the fulfilling of the law*, Rom. xiii. 8, &c. And that St. Paul spake this of the mediatorial law of liberty and christian perfection, and not of the Christless law of innocence and paradisiacal perfection is evident from his calling it *the law of Christ*, that is, Our Redeemer's law, in opposition to our Creator's law, which was given without an atoning sacrifice and a mediating priest, and therefore made no allowance for infirmities, and admitted neither of repentance nor of renovated obedience. Besides, St. Paul was not such a novice, as not to know, that the Galatians and the Romans, who had all sinned, as he observes, Rom. iii. 23, could never be exhorted by any man in his senses, to fulfil the paradisiacal law of innocence by now, loving one another. He therefore indubitably spake of the gracious law of our gentle Melchisedec;—the law of him

him who said, *A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another—as I have loved you, that ye also love one another,* John xiii. 34.—A precious commandment this, which our Lord calls *new*, not because the Jewish mediator had not given it to the Israelites, but because the Christian mediator enforced it by *new* motives, gave *new*, unparalleled instances of obedience to it, annexed *new* rewards to the keeping of it, and required it to be fulfilled with a *new* perfection: and that Christians shall be eternally saved or damned according to their keeping or breaking this mediatorial law of Christian imperfection, this *law of Christ*, this *royal law of Jesus the King of the Jews*, we prove by Matthew xviii. 35. vii. 26. xxv. 45, and Luke vi. 46, &c.

If Mr. Hill's prejudices are not removed by what St. Paul says in Rom. xiii. concerning our fulfilling the gospel-law of perfection; we intreat him to ponder the glorious testimony which the Apostle, in Rom. ii. bears to this law, which he does not scruple to call *his gospel*. With regard to this gracious rule of judgment, says he, *There is no respect of persons with God. For as many as have sinned without a [mediator's written] law, shall also perish without a [mediator's written] law: and as many as have sinned in [or under a mediator's written] law, shall be judged by the [mediator's written] law. For not the hearers of the [mediator's] law, are just before God, but the doers of the [mediator's] law shall be justified.* [Nor are the heathens totally destitute of this law:] *for when the gentiles, which have not the [mediator's written] law, do by nature [by natural conscience, which is the echo of the mediator's voice, and the reflection of the light which enlightens every man that cometh into the world] when the gentiles, I say, do [by that means] the things contained in the [mediator's] law; they having not the [mediator's] law, are [the mediator's] law unto themselves; their conscience also bearing witness; and their thoughts [in consequence of the witness]*

witness borne] accusing, or else excusing one another : in the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my gospel, [that is, according to the gospel-law which I preach.] Rom. ii. 11, &c.—For, while some lay up treasures in heaven, others treasure up to themselves wrath against the day of wrath and of the righteous judgment of God, who will render to every man according to his deeds : to them, who by patient continuance in well doing, [or in keeping the mediator's law according to their dispensation] seek for glory [he will render] eternal life, [like a righteous judge, and gracious rewarder of them that diligently seek him.] But unto them that do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness [he will render] indignation and wrath, [in just proportion to the more or less bright discoveries of the truth, which shall have been made to them.] Rom. ii. 5, &c.—For that servant, who [clearly] knew his Lord's will, [by a written law, delivered through the hands of a mediator] and prepared not himself [that he might have boldness in the day of judgment] neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes [in the hell of unbelieving Jews and disobedient christians. But he that knew not [his master's will, by an outwardly-written law,] and did [break the law of nature, disobey the voice of his conscience, and] commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes. For unto whosoever much is given, of him shall be much required, Luke xii. 47, 48. An indubitable proof this, that, as something is required of all ; something, even a talent of grace, a measure of the spiritual light which enlightens every man, is given to all to improve with, and bring forth fruit to perfection : some thirty-fold, some sixty-fold, and others an hundred-fold, according to their respective dispensations.

From these quotations it appears to us indubitable, that the gospel of St. Paul, and, of consequence, the gospel of Christ, is not a wanton, lawless

lawless gospel ; but an holy, lawful gospel, in which evangelical promises are properly guarded by evangelical rules of judgment ; and the doctrines of grace, wisely connected with the doctrines of justice. If this is a glaring truth ; what a dangerous game do many good men play, when they emasculate St. Paul's gospel, and with antinomian rashness cut off, and cast away that morally-legal part of it, which distinguishes it both from the *ceremonial gospel*, which the Galatians foolishly embraced ; and from the *lawless gospel*, which Solifidian gospelers contend for, under the perverted name of *free-grace* ! And how seriously should we all consider these awful words of St. Paul ! *There are some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ : but though we, or an angel from heaven preach any other gospel unto you [whether it be a more severe judaizing gospel—or a less strict solifidianizing gospel] than that which we have preached unto you [which stands at an equal distance from burdensome jewish ceremonies ; and from lawless, Solifidian tenets ;] let him be accursed,* Gal. i. 7, 8.

This recapitulation of the principal scripture-proofs of our doctrine would be exceedingly deficient, if I did not once more remind the reader of the glorious testimony, which St. James bears to the *law of liberty*. *If ye* [believers, says he,] *fulfil the royal law, according to the scripture, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself, ye do well : [Ye quit yourselves like perfect christians]* But if ye have [uncharitably] respect to persons, ye commit sin, and are convinced of the law as transgressors : [that is, Ye are condemned by the mediator's law, under which ye are.] *For whosoever shall keep the whole law [of the mediator ;] and yet [uncharitably] offend in one point, he is guilty of all, &c. So speak ye therefore, and so do, as people that shall be judged by the law of liberty [the mediator's law.] For he [the imperfect, uncharitable, fallen believer] shall have judgment without mercy, that hath shewed no [charity, or] mercy,* James ii. 8.

We

We rest our doctrine of jewish and christian perfection on these consentaneous testimonies of St. James and St. Paul; of *Moses*, the great law-givet of the Jews; and of *Christ*, the great law-giver of the Christians; the doctrine of perfection, or of perfectly-cordial obedience, being inseparably connected with the *mediatorial laws* of *Moses* and of *Christ*. The moment you destroy these laws, by turning them into “rules of life,” through the *personal observance* of which no believer shall ever be justified or condemned, you destroy the ground of jewish and christian perfection, and you impose upon us the lawless, unscriptural tenet of an obedience performed by proxy, and of an imputed perfection, which will do us as little good in life, death, and judgment, as imputed health opposed to inherent health will do to a poor, sickly, dying criminal. Thus, after leading my reader round a large circle of proofs, I return to the very point whence I started, [See the beginning of the preface:] And I conclude, that a gospel without a *mediatorial law*, without an *evangelical law*, without the *conditional promise* of a crown of heavenly glory to the obedient, and without the *conditional threatening* of infernal stripes to the disobedient,—I conclude, I say, that such a gospel will always lead us to the centre of Antinomianism; to the *Diana* and *Hecate* of the Calvinists; to *Lawless Free-grace* and *Everlasting Free-wrath*; or, if you please, to *Finished salvation* and *Finished damnation*. On the other hand, the moment you admit what the jewish and christian gospel-covenants are so express about, I mean an *evangelical law*, or a *practicable rule of judgment*, as well as of conduct, eternal salvation and eternal damnation become *conditional*: they are suspended upon the evangelical perfection or imperfection of our obedience: and the Rev. Mr. *Berridge* hits on the head the golden nail, on which hang all the *law and the prophets*, all the four gospels and the epistles, when he says, “*Sincere obedience*

as a condition, will lead you unavoidably up to a perfect obedience."

And now reader chuse which thou wilt follow, Mr. Hill's lawless Antinomian gospel, or St. Paul and St. James's gospel, including the evangelical law of christian liberty and perfection, by which law thou shalt be conditionally justified or condemned, *when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ, according to my gospel,* Rom. ii. 16. If thou chuse imputed righteousness and imputed perfection without any condition, it will "unavoidably" lead thee down into a death-purgatory, through the chambers of *indwelling sin*, if thou art an *elect* in the Calvinian sense of the word; or to eternal damnation, through the chambers of *necessary sin*, if thou art one of those whom our opponents call *reprobates*. But if thou cordially chuse the sincere, voluntary, evangelical obedience of faith, which we preach both as a condition and as a privilege; it will, [Mr. Hill's second being judge,] "unavoidably lead thee up to perfect obedience." There is absolutely no medium between these two gospels. Thou must be either a *Crispian, lawless imperfectionist*, or an *evangelical, lawful perfectionist*; unless thou chuse to be a *Gallio*, —one who cares for none of these things. Thou must wrap thyself up in unscriptural notions of imputed righteousness, imputed holiness, and imputed obedience, which make up the ideal garment of calvinistically imputed perfection: or thou must perfectly *wash in the blood of the Lamb thy robes of inherent, though derived righteousness, holiness, and obedience, which [when they are thus washed] are the rich, wedding garment of evangelical perfection.*

SECTION XVI.

Mr. HILL objects, that the distinction between sins, and [evangelically speaking] innocent infirmities, is a licentious distinction derived from the Church of Rome.—The author shews, that it is truly scriptural, and that judicious Calvinists, and the Church of England hold it. He draws the line between sins and innocent infirmities.—A view of the extremes into which rigid, Pelagian perfectionists, and rigid Calvinian imperfectionists, have run east and west from the gospel-line of an evangelically-sinless perfection.—An answer to Mr. Henry's grand argument for the continuance of indwelling sin—Conclusion of the argumentative part of this Essay.

WE have proved in the preceding section, that the doctrine of an evangelically-sinless perfection is truly scriptural; being inseparably connected with the greatest and most excellent precepts of the Old and New Testament, and with the most evangelical and awful sanctions of Moses and Jesus Christ. This might suffice to show, that our doctrine of perfection cannot be called *popish*, or *pelagian*, with any more candor, than the doctrine of the Trinity can be branded with those epithets, because *Pelagius* and the *Pope* embrace it. If, in order to be good Protestants, we were obliged to renounce all that the Jews, Turks, and Infidels hold; we should renounce the Old Testament, because the Jews revere it: we should renounce the unity of God, because the Mahometans contend for it: nay, we should renounce common humanity, because all Infidels approve it. I beg leave however to dwell a moment more upon Mr. Hill's objection, that the Pope holds our doctrine.

When this gentleman was at *Rome*, he may remember that his *Cicerone* shewed him, in the ancient church of St. Paul without the gate, [if I

remember the name right] the pictures of all the Popes from St. Peter, *Linus*, *Cletus* and *Clement*, down to the Pope who then filled what is called “*St. Peter’s chair.*” According to this view of papacy, Mr. Hill is certainly in the right; for if he turns back to Sect. V. he will see that *Peter* the first Pope [so called] was a complete perfectionist, and if *Clemens*, or St. *Clement* [*Paul’s fellow-labourer*] was really the fourth Pope, it is certain, that he also held our doctrine as well as *Peter* and *Christ*; for he wrote to the *Corinthians*, “*By love were all the elect of God made perfect.*—Those who were made perfect in love are in the region of the just, and shall appear in glory.—Happy then are we, if we fulfil the commandments of God in the unity of love.”—Following the commandments of God they sin not.” *St. Clem. Ep. to the Cor.* This glorious testimony, which St. *Clement* bears to the doctrine of perfection might be supported by many correspondent quotations from the other Fathers. But as this would too much swell this Essay, I shall only produce one, which is so much the more remarkable, as it is taken from St. *Jerom’s* third Dialogue against *Pelagius*, the rigid, overdoing perfectionist. “*Hoc et nos dicimus, posse hominem non peccare, si velit, pro tempore, pro loco, pro imbecillitate corporea, quamdiu intentus est animus, quamdiu chorda nullo vitio laxatur in citharā.*”—That is, We [who oppose *Pelagius’s* notions about Adamic perfection] maintain also, that considering our time, place, and bodily weakness, we can avoid sinning if we will; as long as our mind is bent upon it, and the string of our harp [i. e. of our christian resolution] is not slackened by any wilful fault.

When I read these blessed testimonies in favour of the truth which we vindicate, my pleased mind flies to Rome, and I am ready to say, Hail! ye holy Popes and Fathers, ye perfect servants of my perfect Lord! I am ambitious to share with you the names of “*Arimian*, *Pelagian*, *Papist*, temporary

rary monster, and Atheist, in masquerade." I publish to the world my steady resolution to follow you, and any of your successors, who have *done and taught* Christ's commandments. And I enter my protest against the mistakes of the ministers, who teach that Christ's law is impracticable, that sin must dwell in our hearts as long as we live, and that we must continue to break the Lord's precepts in our inward parts unto death.

I shall close my answer to this argument of Mr. Hill, by a quotation from Mr. Wesley's *Remarks upon the Review*. "It [our doctrine of christian perfection] has been condemned by the Pope and his whole conclave, even in this present century. In the famous bull *Unigenitus* they utterly condemn the *uninterrupted act* [of faith and love, which some men talked of, of continually rejoicing, praying, and giving thanks] as dreadful heresy."—If we have *Peter* and *Clement* on our side, we are willing to let Mr. Hill screen his doctrine behind the Pope who issued out the bull *Unigenitus*, and if he pleases, behind the present Pope too.

However says Mr. Hill, "The distinction between *fins* and innocent *infirmities* is derived from the Romish church."

Answer. (1) We rejoice, if the church of Rome was never so unreasonable, and so deluded by Antinomian Popes, as to confound an involuntary, wandering thought, an undesigned mistake, and a lamented fit of drowsiness at prayer, with adultery, murder, and incest; in order to represent Christ's mediatorial law as absolutely impracticable; and to insinuate that fallen believers, who actually commit the above-mentioned *crimes*, are God's dear children, as well as the obedient believers, who labour under the above-described infirmities.

(2) We apprehend that Mr. Hill, and the divines who have espoused Dr. Crisp's errors, are

some of the last persons in the world, by whom we may, with decency, be charged to hold “*lascivious*” doctrines. And we are truly sorry, that any Protestants should make it their busines to corrupt that part of the gospel, which (if we believe Mr. Hill) the Pope himself has modestly spared.—

(3) Mr. Hill might, with much more propriety, have objected, that our distinction is derived from the *jewish church*: for, “*the old rogue,*” as some Solifidians have rashly called *Moses*, evidently made a distinction between *sin* and *infirmities*; he punished a daring sabbath-breaker, and an audacious rebel, with death,—with present death,—with the most terrible kind of death. The language of his burning zeal seemed to be that of *David*, *Be not merciful to them that offend of malicious wickedness*, Psalm l ix. 5.—But upon such as accidentally contracted some involuntary pollution, he inflicted no other punishment, than that of a separation from the congregation till evening. If Mr. Hill considers the difference of these two punishments, he must either give place to perverseness, or confess, that wilful sins, and involuntary infirmities, were not calvinistically confounded by the Mediator of the old covenant? and that *Moses* himself made a rational and evangelical distinction between *the spot of God's children, and the spot of the perverse and crooked generation*, Deut. xxxii. 4.

(4) That *Christ*, the equitable and gracious Mediator of the new covenant, was not less merciful than stern *Moses*, with respect to the distinction we contend for, appears to us evident from his making a wide difference between the almost involuntary drowsiness of the eleven disciples in *Gethsemane*, and the malicious watchfulness of the traitor *Judas*. Concerning the offence of the former, he said, *The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak*; and with respect to the crime of the latter, he declared, *It would be good for that man, if he had never been born.*

(5) *David*

(5) David and Paul exactly followed herein the doctrine of Moses and Christ. The Psalmist says, *Keep back thy servant also from presumptuous sins : let them not have the dominion over me : then shall I be upright ; [or rather, as the word literally means in the original] I shall be perfect, and innocent from the great transgression,* Psalm xix. 13. Hence it is evident that some transgressions are incompatible with the perfection which David prayed for ; and that some errors, or some secret [unnoticed, involuntary] faults are not.

(6) This, we apprehend, is evident from his own words, *Blessed is the man unto whom the Lord imputeth no sin ; and in whose spirit there is no guile,* [though there may be some improprieties in his words and actions.] Psalm xxxii. 2. David's meaning may be illustrated by the well-known case of Nathanael. Philip said to him, *We have found him of whom Moses wrote in the law :* [a clear proof this, by the bye, that the law frequently means the Jewish gospel, which testifies of Christ to come :] it is Jesus of Nazareth. And Nathanael said unto him, *Can any good thing come out of Nazareth ?* Here was an involuntary fault, an improper quoting of a proverbial expression ; and nevertheless, as he quoted it with a good intention, and to make way for a commendable enquiry into the report which he heard, his error was consistent with perfection ; he continued innocent from the great [wilful] transgression. This I prove : (1) By his conduct ; Philip saith unto him, *Come and see :* and he instantly went, without betraying the least degree of the self-conceited stiffness, surly pride, and morose resistance, which always accompany the unloving prejudice, by which the law of Christ is broken.—And (2) By our Lord's testimony : *Jesus saw Nathanael coming to him, and saith of him, Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile !*—that is, no mixture of indwelling sin. Our Lord's word for guile, in the original, is *dolos*, the very word, which being also connected

connected with a *negative*, forms the epithet *adolos*, whereby St. Peter denotes the *unadultered purity* of God's word, which he compares to *sincere, or perfectly, pure milk*, 1 Peter ii. 2. Hence I conclude, that, Christ himself being witness, [evangelically-speaking] there was no more *indwelling sin* in Nathanael, than there is in the pure word of God; and that this is the happy case of all those, who fully deserve the glorious title of *Israelite indeed*, which our Lord publicly bestowed upon Nathanael. To return:

(7) If to make a distinction between *sins* and *infirmities*, constitutes a man half a Papist, it is evident that St. Paul was not less tinctured with *popery* [so called] than David, Moses, and Jesus Christ: for he writes to *Timothy*: *them that sin, rebuke before all, that others also may fear*, 1 Tim. v. 20. And yet, he writes to the Romans, *We that are strong, ought to bear with the infirmities of the weak*, Rom. xv. 1. Here are two plain commands; the first, not to bear with *sins*; and the second, to bear with *infirmities*: a demonstration this, that there is an essential difference between *sins* and *infirmities*, and that this difference is discoverable to others, and much more to ourselves. Nay, in most cases, it is so discernable to those who have their spiritual senses properly disposed, that they can as easily distinguish between *sins* [properly so called] and *infirmities* as a wise judge can distinguish between accidental death, and wilful murder; or between unknowingly passing a false guinea with a kind intention to relieve the poor, and treasonably coining it with a roguish design to defraud the public. The difference between the sun and the moon is not more striking in the natural world, than the difference between *sins* and *infirmities* is in the moral world. Nevertheless, blind prejudice will probably confound them still, to darken counsel, and to raise a cloud of logical dust, that *Antinomianism*

mianism [the Diana of the Imperfectionists] may make her escape, and save *indwelling sin*, which is the claw of the hellish lion, the tooth of the old dragon, the fishing hook of Satan, and the deadly sting of the king of terrors.

(8) Judicious Calvinists have seen the propriety of the distinction, for which we are represented as unsound Protestants. Of many whom I could mention, I shall only quote one, who, for his piety, wisdom, and moderation, is an honour to Calvinism; I mean the Rev. Mr. Newton, Minister of Olney. In his *Letters on religious subjects*, p. 199, he makes this ingenuous confession: “The experience of past years has taught me” [and I hope that, some day or other, it will also teach our other opponents] “to distinguish between *ignorance* and *disobedience*. The Lord is gracious to the *weakness* of his people: many *involuntary mistakes* will not interrupt their communion with him. He pities their *infirmitiy*, and teaches them to do better. But if they dispute his *known will*, and act *against the dictates of conscience*, they will surely suffer for it.—*Wilful sin* sadly perplexes and retards our progress.”—Here is, if I mistake not, a clear distinction made by a true Protestant, between *disobedience* or *wilful sin*, and *weakness*, *involuntary mistakes* or *infirmitiy*.

(9) If Mr. Hill will not regard Mr. Newton’s authority, I beg he would show some respect for the authority of our church, and the import of his own prayers. If there is absolutely no difference between *wilful sins*, *involuntary negligences*, and *unavoidable ignorances*: why does our church distinguish them, when she directs us to pray in the litany, *that it may please God to forgive us all our sins, negligences and ignorances?* If these three words have but one meaning, should not Mr. Hill leave out the two last, as ridiculous tautology? Or, at least, to remove from our church the suspicion of Popery, should he not pray every Sunday, that God would *forgive us all our sins, sins, and sins!*

From

From the nine preceding remarks and quotations it appears, if I mistake not, that our important distinction between *wilful sin* and *infirmities*, or *involuntary offences*, recommends itself to reason and conscience; that it is supported by the law of *Moses*, and the gospel of *Christ*; by the psalms of *David*, and the epistles of St. *Paul*; by the writings of judicious Calvinists, and the liturgy of our church; and therefore, it is as absurd to call it a *popish* distinction, because the Papists are not injudicious enough to reject it, as it is absurd to call the doctrine of *Christ's* divinity, a *doctrine of devils*, because devils acknowledged him to be the Son of God, and their Omnipotent Controller.

Should Mr. *Hill* reply, that, if this distinction cannot properly be called *popish*, it deserves to be called "*antinomian*" and "*licentious*"; because it countenances all the men, who give to their *grossest sins*, the soft name of *innocent infirmities*; we answer: (1) It has been proved, that *Moses* and *Jesus Christ* held this distinction; and therefore to call it *antinomian* and *licentious*, is to call not only *Christ* the holy one of God, but even "*legal*" *Moses* an *antinomian*, and an advocate for *licentiousness*. See what these *Calvinian refinements* come to!—(2) The men who abuse the doctrine of the distinction between *sins* and *infirmities*, abuse as much the doctrine of *God's mercy*, and the important distinction between *working days* and the *Lord's day*: but, is this a proof that the doctrines of *God's mercy*, and of the distinction between the *Lord's day* and other days, are "*licentious tenets*, against which all that wish well to the interest of *protestantism* should protest in a body?"

If Mr. *Hill* tries to embarrass us by saying, "Where will you draw the line between *wilful sins* and [evangelically speaking] *innocent infirmities*?"—We reply without the least degree of embarrassment, Where *Moses* and the Prophets have drawn it in the Old Testament; where *Christ* and the

the Apostles have done it in the New; and where we do it after them in these pages. And retorting the question, to show its frivolousness, we ask, Where will Mr. Hill draw the line between the free, evangelical observing of the Lord's day, and the superstitious, pharisaic keeping of the Sabbath; or between weak, saving faith, and wilful unbelief? Nay, upon his principles, where will he draw it even between a *good* and a *bad* work; if all our good works are really dung, dross, and filthy rags?

However, as the question is important, I shall give it a more particular answer. An *infirmit*y is a breach of Adam's law of paradisiacal perfection, which our covenant-God does not require of us now: and [evangelically-speaking] a *sin* for christians, is a breach of Christ's evangelical law of christian perfection; a perfection this, which God requires of all christian believers.—An *infirmit*y [considering it with the error which it occasions] is consistent with pure love to God and man: but a *sin* is inconsistent with that love.—An *infirmit*y is free from guile, and has its root in our *animal* frame; but a *sin* is attended with guile, and has its root in our *moral* frame; springing either from the habitual corruption of our heart, or from the momentary perversion of our tempers.—An *infirmit*y unavoidably results from our unhappy circumstances, and from the necessary infelicities of our present state. But a *sin* flows from the avoidable and perverse choice of our own will.—An *infirmit*y has its foundation in an involuntary want of light and power: and a *sin*, in a wilful abuse of the present light and power we have. The one arises from involuntary ignorance and weakness, and is always attended with a good meaning, a meaning unmixed with any *bad* design, or *wicked* prejudice: but the other has its source in voluntary perverseness and presumption, and is always attended with a meaning altogether *bad*; or, at best, with a good meaning

ing founded on wicked prejudices. If to this line, the candid reader adds the line which we have drawn [Section VI.] between the perfection of a gentile, that of a jew, and that of a christian, he will not easily mistake in passing a judgment between the wilful sins which are inconsistent with an evangelically sinless perfection, and the innocent infirmities which are consistent with such a perfection.

Confounding what God has divided, and dividing what the God of truth has joined, are the two capital stratagems of the god of error. The first he has chiefly used to eclipse or darken the doctrine of christian perfection. By means of his instruments, he has perpetually confounded the Christless law of perfect innocence given to Adam before the fall; and the mediatorial, evangelical law of penitential faith, under which our first parents were put, when God promised them the seed of the woman, the mild Lawgiver, the Prince of peace, the gentle King of the Jews, who *breaks not the bruised reed, nor quenches the smoaking flax*, but compassionately tempers the doctrines of justice by the doctrines of grace, and instead of the law of innocence [which he has kept and made honourable for us] has substituted, his own evangelical law of repentance, faith, and gospel-obedience, which law is actually kept, according to one or another of its various editions, by all *just men made perfect*; that is, by all the *wise virgins*, who are ready for the midnight cry, and the marriage of the Lamb.

Hence it appears that *Pelagius* and *Augustin* were both right in some things, and wrong in a capital point. *Pelagius*, the father of the rigid Perfectionists and rigid Free-willers, asserted that Christ's law could be kept, and that the keeping of that law was all the perfection which that law requires. So far *Pelagius* was right; having reason, conscience, and scripture on his side. But he was grossly mistaken,

mistaken, if he confounded Christ's mediatorial law, with the law of paradisiacal perfection. This was his capital error, which led him to deny original sin, and to extol human powers so excessively as to intimate, that by a faithful and diligent use of them, man may be as innocent, and as perfect, as Adam was before the fall.

On the other hand, *Augustin*, the father of the rigid Imperfectionists, and rigid Bound-willers, maintained, that, our natural powers being greatly weakened and depraved by the fall, we cannot, by all the helps which the gospel affords, keep the law of innocence; that is, always think, speak, and act, with that exactness, and propriety, which became immortal man, when God pronounced him *very good* in paradise: he asserted, that every impropriety of thought, language, or behaviour, is a breach of the law of perfection, under which God placed innocent man in the garden of Eden: and he proved that every breach of this law is a sin against it, because the transgression of a law is *sin*; and that, of consequence, there can be no Adamic paradisiacal perfection in this life. So far *Augustin* was very right:—so far reason and scripture support his doctrine:—and so far the church is obliged to him for having made a stand against *Pelagius*. But he was very much mistaken when he abolished the essential difference which there is between our Creator's law of strict justice, and our Redeemer's mediatorial law of justice tempered with grace and mercy. Hence he concluded that there is absolutely no keeping the law, and consequently no performing any perfect obedience in this life; and that we must sin as long as we continue in the body. Thus, while *Pelagius* made adult christians as perfectly *sinless* as Adam was in paradise; *Augustin* made them so completely *sinful*, as to make it necessary for every one of them to go into a death-purgatory, crying, "There is a law in my members, which brings me

into captivity to the law of sin. Sin dwelleth in me. With my flesh I serve the law of sin. I am carnal, sold under sin.—O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me?"

The scripture-doctrine, which we vindicate, stands at an equal distance from these extremes of *Pelagius* and *Augustin*. It rejects, with *Augustin*, the Adamic perfection which *Pelagius* absurdly pleaded for: and it explodes, with *Pelagius*, the necessary continuance of indwelling sin and carnal bondage, which *Augustin* no less absurdly maintained. Thus, adult, believers are still sinners,—still imperfect, according to the righteous law of *paradisaical innocence* and perfection: and yet, they are really saints, and perfect according to the gracious law of *evangelical justification* and perfection; a law this, which considers as upright, and perfect, all the godly heathens, Jews, and Christians, who are *without guile* in their respective folds, or under their various dispensations. Thus, by still vindicating the various editions of Christ's mediatorial law, which has been at times almost buried under heaps of *pharisaic* and *antinomian* mistakes, we still defend practical religion. And, as in the Scripture-Scales, by proving the evangelical marriage of *Free-grace* and *Free-will*, we have reconciled *Zelotes* and *Honestus* with respect to *faith* and *works*: so in this Essay, by proving the evangelical union of the doctrines of *grace* and *justice* in the *mild* and *righteous* law of our Redeemer, we reconcile *Augustin* and *Pelagius*, and force them to give up reason and scripture, or to renounce the monstrous errors which keep them asunder: I mean the deep, *antinomian* errors of *Augustin* with respect to *indwelling sin* and a *death-purgatory*; and the high-flown, *pharisaic* errors of *Pelagius*, with regard to *Adamic perfection*, and a complete freedom from original degeneracy.

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The method we have used to bring about this reconciliation is quite plain and uniform. We have kept our Scripture Scales even, and used every weight of the sanctuary without prejudice; especially those weights which the moralists throw aside as *Calvinistic* and *Antinomian*; and those which the Solifidians cast away as *Mosaic* and legal. Thus, by evenly balancing the two gospel-axioms, we have re-united the doctrines of grace and of justice, which heated *Augustin* and heated *Pelagius*, have separated; and we have distinguished our Redeemer's evangelical law, from our Creator's *paradisaical* law; two distinct laws these, which those illustrious antagonists have confounded; and we flatter ourselves that, by this artless means, another step is taken towards bringing the two partial gospels of the day, to the old standards of the one, complete gospel of Jesus Christ.

I have done unfolding our reconciling plan: but the disciples of *Augustin*, rallied by *Calvin*, have not done attacking it. I hope that I have answered the objections of Mr. *Hill*, Mr. *Toplady*, and Mr. *Martin*, against the evangelical perfection which we defend; but another noted divine of their persuasion comes up to their assistance. It is the Rev. Mr. *Matthew Henry*, who has deservedly got a great name among the Calvinists, by his valuable *Exposition of the Bible* in five folio volumes. This huge piece of ordnance, carries an heavy ball, which threatens the very heart of our sinless gospel. It is too late to attempt an abrupt and silent flight. Let then Mr. *Henry* fire away. If our doctrine of an evangelically-sinless perfection is founded upon a rock, it will stand; the ponderous ball, which seems likely to demolish it, will rebound against the doctrine of indwelling sin: and the standard of christian liberty which we wave, will be more respected than ever.

"Corruption [faith that illustrious opponent] is left remaining in the heart of good christians, that

they may learn war, may keep on the whole armour of God, and stand continually upon their guard."—"Thus corruption is driven out of the heart of believers *by little and little*. The work of sanctification is carried on gradually: but that judgment will at length be brought forth into a complete victory."—Namely, when Death shall come to the assistance of the atoning blood, and of the spirit's power. That this is Mr. Henry's doctrine is evident from his comment on Gal. v. 17, "In a renewed man, where there is something of a good principle, there is a struggle between, &c. the remainder of sin, and the beginnings of grace; and this, christians must expect will be their exercise *as long as they continue in this world:*" —or, to speak more intelligibly, till they go into the death purgatory.

Not to mention here again, Gal. v. 17, &c. Mr. Henry builds this uncomfortable doctrine upon the following text, *The Lord thy God will put out those nations before thee by little and little; thou mayest not consume them at once, lest the beasts of the field increase upon thee*, Deut. vii. 22. And he gives us to understand, that "pride and security, and other sins," are "the enemies more dangerous than the beasts of the field, that would be apt to increase" upon us, if God delivered us from indwelling sin, i. e. from the remains of pride, and carnal security, and other sins.—This explosion is backed by an appeal to the following text, *Now these are the nations, which the Lord left to prove Israel by them—to know whether they [the Israelites] would hearken to the commandments of the Lord*, Judges iii. 1. 4. See Mr. Henry's Exposition on these passages.

To this we answer; (1) That is it absurd to build the mighty doctrine of a death-purgatory upon an historical allusion. If such allusions were proofs, we could easily multiply our arguments. We could say, that sin is to be utterly destroyed, because

cause Moses says, *The Lord delivered into our hands Og and all his people, and we smote him until none was left unto him remaining,* Deut. iii. 3.—*Because Joshua smote Horam king of Gezer, and his people, until he had left him none remaining,* Deut. iii. 33.—*Because Saul was commanded utterly to destroy the sinners, the Amalekites, and lost his crown for sparing their king:* because when God overthrew Pharaoh and all his host, there remained not so much as one of them, Ex. xiv. 28. Because when God rained fire upon Sodom and Gomorrah, he overthrew all their [wicked] inhabitants :—and because Moses says, *I took your sin, the calf which ye had made, and burnt it with fire, and stamped it, and ground it very small, even until it was as small as dust, and cast the dust thereof into the brook,* Deut. ix. 21. But we should blush to build the doctrine of christian perfection upon so absurd and slender a foundation. And yet, such a foundation would be far more solid, than that on which Mr. Henry builds the doctrine of christian imperfection, and of the necessary indwelling of sin in the most holy believers: for

(2) Before God permitted the Canaanites to remain in the land, he had said, “When ye are passed over Jordan, then ye shall drive out all the inhabitants of the land before you, and destroy all their pictures:—for I have given you the land to possess it.—But, if ye will not drive out the inhabitants of the land before you, then it shall come to pass, that those which ye let remain of them, shall be pricks in your eyes, and thorns in your sides, and shall vex you in the land wherein ye dwell. And moreover I shall do unto you, as I thought to do unto them,” Numb. xxxviii. 51, &c. Hence it appears, that the sparing of the Canaanites was a punishment inflicted upon the Israelites, as well as a favour shewn to the Canaanites, some of whom [like Rahab and the Gibeonites] probably turned to the Lord, and as God’s creatures, enjoyed his saving mercy in the land of promise. But is

T 3 *indwelling*

indwelling sin one of God's creatures, that God should shew it any favour, and should refuse his assistance to the faithful believers, who are determined to give it no quarter? Can *indwelling sin* be converted to God, as the *indwelling Canaanites* might, and as some of them undoubtedly were:

(3) But the capital flaws of Mr. Henry's argument are, I apprehend, two suppositions, the absurdity of which is glaring: "Corruption [says he] is left remaining in the heart of good christians, that they may learn war, may keep on the whole armour of God, and stand continually upon their guard." Just as if Christ had not learned war, kept on the breast-plate of righteousness, and stood continually upon his guard, without the help of *indwelling sin*!—just as if the world, the devil, the weakness of the flesh, and death, our last enemy, with which our Lord so severely conflicted, were not adversaries powerful enough to prove us, to engage us to learn war, and to make us keep on and use the whole armour of God to the end of our life? —The other absurd supposition is that "pride and security, and other sins" [which are supposed to be typified by the wild beasts mentioned in Deut. viii. 22,] will increase upon us by the destruction of *indwelling sin*. But is it not as ridiculous to suppose this, as to say, "Pride shall increase upon us by the destruction of pride; and carnal security will gather strength by the extirpation of carnal security, and by the implanting of constant watchfulness, which is a branch of the christian perfection which we contend for?"

(4) With respect to the inference, which Mr. Henry draws from these words, *Thou mayst not consume them at once: the Lord will put them out before thee by little and little;* is it not highly absurd also? Does he give us the shadow of an argument to prove, that this verse was spoke of our *indwelling corruptions*? And suppose it was, would this prove that the doctrine of a death-purgatory is true? You say,

fay to a greedy person, You must eat your dinner by little and little; you cannot swallow it down at one gulp: a farmer teaches his son to plow, and says, We cannot plow this field at once, but we may plow it by little and little, i. e. by making one furrow after another, till we end the last furrow. Hence I draw the following inferences: we eat our meals, and plow our fields, by little and little; and therefore no dinner can be eaten, and no field plowed before death. A surgeon says, that the healing of a wound "*is carried on graciously*;" hence his prejudiced mate runs away with the notion, that no wound can be healed so long as a patient is alive.. Who does not see the flaw of these colclusions?

(5) But the greatest absurdity, I apprehend, is yet behind. Not to observe, that we do not remember to have read any command in our Bibles not to consume sin at once; or any declaration, that God will put it out only "*by little and little:*" we ask: What length of time do you suppose God means? You make him say, that he will make an end of our indwelling sin by little and little: do you think he means four days, four years, or fourscore years?—If you say, that God cannot or will not wholly cleanse the thoughts of our hearts under fourscore years, you send all who die under that age into hell, or into some purgatory, where they must wait till the eighty years of their conflict with indwelling sin are ended.—If you say, that God can or will do it in four days, but not under; you absurdly suppose that the penitent thief remained at least three days in paradise full of indwelling sin: seeing his *sanctification* was to be "*carried on gradually*" in the space of four days at least.—If you are obliged to grant, that, when the words *by little and little*, are applied to the destruction of indwelling sin, they may mean *four hours* [the time which the penitent thief probably lived after his conversion] as well as *four days*; do not you begin to be ashamed

ashamed of your system? And if you reply, that death alone fully extirpates indwelling sin; does not this favourite tenet of yours, overturn Mr. Henry's doctrine about the *necessity* of the slow, "gradual" destruction of indwelling sin? May not a sinner believe in a moment, when God helps him to believe? And may not a believer [whom you suppose necessarily full of indwelling sin as long as he is in this world] die in a moment?—If you answer in the negative, you deny the sudden death of John the baptist, St. James, and St. Paul, who had their heads cut off in a moment:—In a word, you deny that any believer can die suddenly.—If you reply in the affirmative, you give up the point, and grant that indwelling sin may be instantaneously destroyed. And now what becomes of Mr. Henry's argument, which supposes that sanctification can never be complete without a long, gradual process; and that the extirpation of sin cannot take place but "by little and little?"

I have set before thee, Reader, the *lights* and *shades* of our doctrine: I have produced our arguments, and those of our opponents; and now, say which of them bear the stamp of *imperfection*? If thou pronounce that *Urim and Thummim*, *Light* and *Perfection*, belong to the arguments of Mr. Hill, Mr. Toplady, Mr. Martin, and Mr. Henry, I must lay by my pen, and deplore the infelicity of our having a reason, which unfays in my breast what it says in thine. But if thou find, after mature deliberation, that our arguments are *light in the Lord*, as being more agreeable to the dictates of unprejudiced reason, than those of our antagonists, more conformable to the plain declarations of the sacred writers, fitter to encourage believers in the way of holiness, more suitable to the nature of undefiled religion, and better adapted to the display of the Redeemer's glory; I shall enjoy the double pleasure of *embracing the Truth*, and of *embracing her together*.

together with thee : in the mean time, closing here the argumentative part of this Essay, I just beg the continuance of thy favourable attention, while I practically address the perfect Pharisees, prejudiced Imperfectionists, imperfect Believers, and perfect Christians.

SECTION XVII.

An Address to perfect christian Pharisees.

I Address you first, ye perfect christian pharisees ; because ye are most ready to profess christian perfection, though alas ! ye stand at the greatest distance from *perfect humility*, the grace which is most essential to the perfect christian's character : and because the enemies of our doctrine make use of you first, when they endeavour to root it up from the earth.

That ye may know what I mean by *perfect christian pharisees*, give me leave to shew you your own picture in the glass of a plain description. Ye have professedly entered into the fold where Christ's sheep, which are perfected in love, rest all at each other's feet, and at the feet of the Lamb of God. But how have ye entered ?—By *Christ, the door* ? or at the door of presumption ?—Not by Christ the door : for Christ is *meekness and lowliness manifested in the flesh* : but ye are still ungentle and fond of praise. When he pours out his soul as a divine prophet, he says, *Learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart : take my yoke upon you, and ye shall find rest unto your souls*. But ye overlook this humble door. Your proud, gigantic minds are above stooping low enough to follow him, who made himself

himself of no reputation that he might raise us to heavenly honours; and who, to pour just contempt upon human pride, had his first night's lodging in a stable, and spent his last night partly on the cold ground in a storm of divine wrath, and partly in an ignominious confinement, exposed to the greatest indignities, which Jews and Gentiles could pour upon him. He rested his infant head upon hay, his dying head upon thorns. A manger was his cradle, and a crois his death-bed. Thirty years he travelled from the sordid stable to the accursed tree, unnoticed by his own peculiar people. In the brightest of his days poor fishermen, some Galilean women, and a company of shouting children, formed all his retinue. Shepherds were his first attendants, and malefactors his last companions.

His first Beatitude was, *Blessed are the poor in spirit*; and the last, *Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and say all manner of evil against you falsely for my sake*. His first doctrine was *Repent*: nor was the last unlike to it; *If I have washed your feet, ye ought also to wash one another's feet, for I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you.—He that will be first among you, let him be the least of all*. Now far from practising with godly sincerity this last lesson of our humble Lord, yo do not so much as truly relish the first. Ye do not delight in, nay, ye abhor penitential poverty of spirit. Your humility is not cordial, and wrought into your nature by grace: but complimentary, and woven into your carriage by art. Ye are humble in looks, in gestures, in voice, in dress, in behaviour; so far as external humility helps you to secure the reputation of perfect christians, at which ye aspire from a motive of pharisaic ambition; but ye continue strangers to the childlike simplicity, and unaffected brokenness of Christ's perfect disciples. Ye are the very reverse of the *Israelites in whom there is no guile*. Ye resemble the artful Gibeonites, who, for a time, imposed upon

upon Joshua's artless simplicity. Your feigned profession of special grace deceives those of God's children, who have more of the simplicity of the dove than of the serpent's wisdom. Ye chuse the lowest place, but ye do not love it. If ye cheerfully take it, it is not among your *equals*, but among your *inferiors*: because you think that such a descending step may raise the credit of your humility, without endangering your superiority: if ye stoop, and go down, it is not because ye see yourselves unworthy of the seat of honour; but because ye hope, that people will by and by say to you, *Come up higher.* Your pharisaic cunning aims at wearing at once the coronet of genuine humility, and the crown of self-exalting pride. Ye love to be esteemed of men for your goodness and devotion: ye want to be admired for your exactness, zeal, and gracious attainments. The pride of the jewish pharisees was coarse in comparison of yours. They wore the rough garment, and you wear the silks of spiritual vanity: and even when ye dye them in the blood of the Lamb, which you extol in word, it is to draw the confidence of humble christians by your christian appearance and language, more than to follow the propensity of a new nature, which loves to be clothed with humility, and feels itself in its own centre, when it rests in deep poverty of spirit, and sees that God is all in all.

One of the greatest ends of Christ's coming into the world, was to empty us of ourselves, and to fill us with humble love; but ye are still full of yourselves, and void of Christ, that is, void of humility, incarnate. Ye still aim at some wrong mark: whether it be self-glory, self-interest, self-pleasure, self-party, or self-applause. In a word, one selfish scheme or another, contrary to the pure love of God and of your neighbour, secretly destroys the root of your profession, and may be compared to the unseen worm, that ate the root of Jonah's gourd.

gourd. Ye have a narrow, contracted spirit: ye do not gladly sacrifice your private satisfaction, your interest, your reputation, your prejudices, to the general interest of truth and love, and to the public good of the whole body of Christ. Ye are yet in secret bondage to men, places, and things. Ye do not heartily entertain the wisdom from above, which is pure, gentle, easy to be intreated, and full of mercy.—Nay, ye are above conviction: gross sinners yield to truth before you. Like *Jehu*, ye are zealous, and ye pretend that it is for the Lord of hosts: but alas! it is for your opinions, your party, your honour. In a word ye do not walk in constant, solemn expectation of death and judgment: your will is not broken: your carnal confidence is yet alive: the heavenly dove does not sit in your breast: *self*, wrapt up in the cloak of humility, is still set up in your heart; and in secret you serve that cursed idol more than God. Satan transformed into an angel of light has artfully led you to the profession of christian perfection through a circle of external performances, through glorious forms of doctrine in the letter, and through a fair show of zeal for complete holiness: the Lord, to punish your formality, has in part given you up to your delusion: and now, ye as much believe yourselves perfect christians, as the pharisees, in our Lord's day, believed themselves perfect Jews.

Mr. Wesley, in his *Plain Account of christian perfection*, has borne his faithful testimony against such witnesses of perfect love as ye are. If ye despite this address, regard his remarks. ‘Others [says he] who think they have the direct witness of their being renewed in love, are nevertheless manifestly wanting in the fruit.—Some are undoubtedly wanting in long-suffering, christian resignation. They do not see the hand of God in whatever occurs, and cheerfully embrace it. They do not in every thing give thanks, and rejoice evermore. They are not happy; at least not always happy. For sometimes

sometimes they complain, they say, "This is hard!"—Some are wanting in *gentleness*. They resist evil, instead of turning the other cheeck. They do not receive reproach with gentleness; no, nor even reproof. Nay, they are not able to bear contradiction without the appearance, at least, of resentment. If they are reproved, or contradicted, though mildly, they do not take it well. They behave with more distance and reserve than they did before, &c.—Some are wanting in *goodness*. They are not kind, mild, sweet, amiable, soft, and loving at all times, in their spirit, in their words, in their look, in their air, in the whole tenor of their behaviour; and that to all, high and low, rich and poor, without respect of persons; particularly to them that are out of the way, to opposers, and to those of their own houshold. They do not long study, endeavour by every means to make all about them happy.—Some are wanting in *fidelity*, a nice regard to truth, simplicity, and godly sincerity. Their love is hardly *without dissimulation*: something like guile is found in their mouth. To avoid roughness they lean to the other extreme. They are smooth to an excess, so as scarce to avoid a degree of fawning.—Some are wanting in *meekness*, quietness of spirit, composure, evennes of temper. They are up and down, sometimes high, sometimes low; their mind is not well-balanced. Their affections are either not in due proportion; they have too much of the one, too little of the other: or they are not duly mixt and tempered together, so as to counterpoise each other. Hence there is often a jar. Their soul is out of tune, and cannot make the harmony.—Some are wanting in *temperance*. They do not steadily use that kind and degree of food, which they know, or might know, would most conduce to the health, strength, and vigour of the body. Or they are not temperate in sleep: they do not rigorously adhere to what is best for

for body and mind.—They use neither fasting nor abstinence, &c.'

I have described your delusion: but who can describe its fatal consequences? Who can tell the mischief it has done, and continues to do? The few sincere Perfectionists, and the multitude of captious Imperfectionists, have equally found you out. The former are grieved for you; and the latter triumph through you.

When the sincere Perfectionists consider the inconsistency of your profession, they are ready to give up their faith in Christ's all-cleansing blood, and their hope of getting a clean heart in this life. They are tempted to follow the multitude of professors, who sit themselves down to self-imputed righteousness, or in Solifidian notions of an ideal perfection in Christ. And it is well if some of them have not already yielded to the temptation, and begun to fight against the hopes which they once entertained of loving God with all their heart. It is well if some, through you, have not been led to say; 'I once sweetly enjoyed the thought of doing the will of God on earth, as it is done in heaven. Once I hopefully prayed, God would so cleanse my heart, that I might *perfectly* love him, and *worthily* magnify his holy name in this world. But now I have renounced my hopes, and I equally abhor the doctrine of evangelical *perfection*, and that of evangelical *worthiness*. I have made a firm agreement with sin. It shall dwell in my heart so long as my soul shall dwell in my body. Neither the word nor the spirit of Christ shall eject it. When I was a young convert, I believed that Christ could really make an end of all moral pollution, cast out the man of sin, and cleanse us from heart-sin, as well as from outward iniquity in this life: but I soon met with unhumbled, self-willed people, who boldly stood for this glorious liberty, and made me question the truth of the doctrine. Nay, in process of time, I found that some of those

who

who most confidently professed to have attained this salvation were farther from the gentleness, simplicity, catholic spirit, and unfeigned humility of Christ, than many believers, who had never considered the doctrine of christian perfection. These offences striking in with some disappointments which I myself met with, in feebly seeking the pearl of perfect love, made me conclude that it can no more be found than the philosopher's stone, and that they are all either fools or knaves, who set believers upon seeking it. And now I every where decry the doctrine of perfection as a dangerous delusion. I set people against it wherever I go; and my zeal in this respect has been attended with the greatest success. I have damped the hopes of many Perfectionists; and I have proselyted several to the doctrine of christian imperfection. With them I now quietly wait to be purified from indwelling sin in the article of death, and to be made perfect in another world, not only in duty to my parents, in loyalty to the king, in charity to the poor, and love to my wife; but also in patience towards those who cross my will, and in love to all my enemies."

This absurd speech is, I fear, the language of many hearts, although it does not openly drop from many lips. Thus are you, O ye perfect pharisees, the great instruments, by which the Tempter tears away the shield of those unsettled Israelites, who look more at your inconsistencies, than they do at the beauty of holiness, the promise of God, the blood of Christ, and the power of the spirit.

But this is not all, as ye destroy the budding faith of sincere Perfectionists, so ye strengthen the unbelief of the Solifidians. Through you their prejudices are grown up into a fixed detestation of christian perfection. Ye have hardened them in their error, and furnished them with plausible arguments to destroy the truth which ye contend for. Did ye never hear their triumphs? "Ha! ha! So

would we have it ! These are some of the people who stand up for sinless perfection ! They are all alike. Did not I tell you, that you would find them out to be no better than temporary monsters ? What monstrous pride ? What touchiness, obstinacy, bigotry, and stoicism characterizes them ! How do they strain at gnats and swallow camels ! I had rather be an open drunkard than a Perfectionist. Publicans and harlots shall enter into the kingdom of heaven before them."—These are the cutting speeches to which your glaring inconsistency, and the severe prejudices of our opponents give birth. Is it not deplorable that your tempers should thus drive men to abhor the doctrine which your lips recommend !

And what do ye get by thus dispiriting the real friends of christian perfection, and by furnishing its sworn enemies with such sharp weapons agaist it ? Think ye that the mischief ye do shall not recoil upon yourselves ? Is not Christ the same yesterday, to day, and for ever ? If he detested the perfect pharisaism of unhumbled Jews, will he admire the perfect self-righteousness of aspiring christians ? If he formerly *refused the proud, and gave grace to the humble,* what reason have ye to hope that he will submit to your spiritual pride, and reward your religious ostentation with a crown of glory ? Ye perhaps cry out against Antinomianism, and I commend you for it : but are ye not deeply tainted with the worst sort of Antinomianism,—that which starches, stiffens, and swells the soul ? Ye justly bear your testimony against those who render the law of Christ of none effect to believers, by degrading it into a rule, which they strip off the punitive and remunerative sanctions, with which it stands armed in the sacred records. But are ye not doubly guilty, who maintain that this law is still in force as a law, and nevertheless refuse to pay it sincere, internal obedience ? For when ye break the first commandment of Christ's evangelical law,

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by practically discarding penitential poverty of spirit; and when ye transgresst the last, by abhorring the lowest place, by disdaining to wash each others feet, and by refusing to prefer others in honour before yourselves; are ye not guilty of breaking all the law, by breaking it in one point—in the capital point of humble love, which runs through all the parts of the law, as vital blood does through all the parts of the body? O how much more dangerous is the case of an unhumbled man, who stiffly walks in robes of self-made perfection, than that of an humble man, who through prejudice, and the force of example, meekly walks in robes of self imputed righteousness!

Behold, thou callest thyself a perfect christian, and restest in the evangelical law of Christ, which is commonly called the gospel: thou makest thy boast of God; and knowest his will, and approvest the things that are more excellent, even the way of christian perfection, being instructed out of the gospel: and art confident that thou thyself art a guide of the blind, a light of them who are in darkness, an instructor of the foolish, and a teacher of babes, or imperfect believers; having the form of knowledge, and of the truth in the gospel. Thou therefore who teachest another, teachest thou not thyself? Thou that preachest, another should not break the law of Christ, through breaking it dishonourest thou God? For the name of God is blasphemed through you, among those who seek an occasion to blaspheme it. See Romans ii. 17, &c. And think ye that ye shall escape the righteous judgment of God? Has Christ no woes but for jewish pharisees? O be no longer mistaken. Before ye are punished by being here given up to a reprobate mind, and by being hereafter cast into the hell of hypocrites, the outer darkness where there will be more weeping, wailing, and gnashing of teeth than in any other hell!—before ye are overtaken by the awful hour of death, and the dreadful day of judgment; practically learn, that

christian perfection is the mind which was in Christ;—especially his humble, meek, quiet mind; —his gentle, free, loving spirit. Aim at it by sinking into deep self-abhorrence; and not by using, as ye have hitherto done, the empty talk and profession of christian perfection, as a step to reach the top of spiritual pride.

Mistake me not: I do not blame you for holding the doctrine of christian perfection, but for wilfully missing the only way which leads to it; I mean the humble, meek, and loving Jesus, who says, *I am the way, and the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved into so great salvation. He that entereth not by this door into this sheep-fold, but climbeth up some other way: [and especially he that climbeth by the way of pharisaic formality] the same is a thief and robber: he robs Christ of his glory, and pretends to what he has no more right to, than a thief has to your property.* Would ye then be right? Do not cast away the doctrine of an evangelical-sinless holiness; but contend more for it with your heart than with your lips. With all your soul press after such a perfection as Christ, St. Paul, and St. John taught and exemplified;—a perfection of meekness and humble love. Earnestly believe all the woes which the gospel denounces against self-righteous pharisees, and all the blessings which it promises to perfect penitents. Drink less into the letter, and more into the spirit. Thirst after the gentle and humble spirit of Christ, till like a fountain of living water, it spring up to everlasting life in your heart. Ye have climbed to the pharisaic perfection of Saul of Tarsus, when touching the righteousness of the law, he was blameless. Would ye now attain the evangelical perfection which he was possessed of, when he said, *Let us, as many as are perfect, be thus minded?* Only follow him through the regeneration: fall to the dust before God: rise conscious of the blindness of your heart, meekly deplore it with penitential shame:

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and if you follow the directions laid down in the third address, I doubt not but, dangerous as your case is at present, you will be, like St. Paul, as eminent for christian perfection, as you have hitherto been for pharisaic holiness.

SECTION XVIII.

I Fear that, *next* to the persons whom I have just addressed, ye injure the cause of holiness, O ye believers, who have been deluded into doctrinal Antinomianism, by the bad arguments which are answered in the preceding pages. Permit me therefore to address you next; nor suffer prejudice to make you throw away this expostulation, before you have granted it a fair perusal.

Ye directly or indirectly plead for the necessary continuance of indwelling sin in your own hearts, and in the hearts of all true christians. But may I be so bold as to ask, Who gave you leave so to do? And when were ye commissioned to propagate this unholy gospel? Was it at your baptism, when ye were ranked among Christ's soldiers, and received a christians name, in token that ye would keep God's holy will and commandments all the days of your life?—and that you would not be ashamed to fight manfully against the world, the flesh, and the devil unto your life's end? Are not these three enemies strong enough, sufficiently to exercise your patience, and to try your warlike skill to the last? Did your sponsors promise for you that you would quarter a fourth enemy, called *indwelling sin*, in your very breast, lest ye should not have enemies enough to fight against? On the contrary, were ye not exhorted “utterly to abolish the whole body of sin?” If so; is it not strange, that ye should spend part of your precious time in pleading, under va-

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tious pretexts, for the preservation of heart-sin, a sin this, which gives life, warmth and vigour, to the whole body of sin? And is it not deplorable, that, instead of conscientiously fulfilling your baptismal engagements, ye should attack those, who desire to fulfil them by *utterly abolishing the whole body of sin?*

But ye are, perhaps, ministers of the established church: and, in this case, I ask, When did the Bishop send you upon this strange warfare? Was it at your *confirmation*, in which he bound upon you your solemn obligations to *keep God's holy will and commandments*, so as *utterly to abolish the whole body of sin?* Is it probable that he commissioned you to pull down what he *confirmed*; and to demolish the perfection, which he made you vow to attain, and to *walk in all the days of your life?* If the Bishop gave you no such commission at your *confirmation*, did he do it at your *ordination*, when he said, *Receive authority to preach the word of God?* Is there no difference between the *word of God*, which cuts up all sin, root and branch; and the *word of Satan*, which asserts the propriety of the continuance of heart-sin during the term of life?—If not: did the Bishop do it when he exhorted and charged you “*never to cease your labour, care, and diligence, till you have done all that lieth in you, to bring all such as are committed to your charge, to that agreement of faith, and that perfectness of age in Christ, that there shall be no place left among you, for error in religion or viciousnes in life;*”—that is, I apprehend, till the truth of the gospel, and the love of the spirit, have perfectly purified the minds, and renewed the hearts of all your hearers?

How can ye in all your confessions and sacramental offices, renounce sin, the accursed thing which God abhors, and which obedient believers detest; and yet plead for its life, its strength, its constant energy, so long as we are in this world? We could better bear with you, if ye appropriated

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a hand or a foot, an eye or an ear to sin during term of life: but who can bear your pleas for the necessary continuance of sin in the heart? Is it not enough that this murderer of Christ, and all mankind rambles about the walls of the city? Will ye still insinuate that he must have the citadel to the last, and keep it garrisoned with filthy lusts, base affections, bad tempers, or "diabolonians," who, like prisoners, show themselves at the grate; and "like snakes, toads, and wild beasts, are the fiercer for being confined." Who has taught you thus to represent Christ as the *Keeper*, and not the *Destroyer* of our corruptions? If believers are truly willing to get rid of sin, but cannot, because Christ has bolted their hearts with an adamantine decree, which prevents sin from being turned out:—if he has irrevocably given leave to indwelling sin, to quarter for life in every christian's heart, as the king of France in the last century, gave leave to his dragoons to quarter for some months in the houses of the poor oppressed Protestants; who does not see that Christ may be called the protector of indwelling sin, rather than its enemy?

Ye absurdly complain that the doctrine of christian perfection does not exalt our Saviour, because it represents him as radically saving his obedient people from their *indwelling sin* in this life. But are ye not guilty of the very error which ye charge upon us, when ye insinuate that he *cannot* or *will not* say to our inbred sins, *Those mine enemies which will not that I should reign over them, bring hither, and slay them before me!* If a common judge has power to pass sentence of death upon all the robbers, and murderers who are properly prosecuted; and if they are hanged and destroyed in a few days, weeks, or months, in consequence of his sentence; how strangely do ye reflect upon Christ, and revive the Agag within us, when ye insinuate, that he [the Judge of all] who was manifested for this very purpose, that he might destroy the works of the devil, so far

far forgets his errand, that he never destroys indwelling sin in one of his willing people, so long as they are in this world; although that sin is the capital, and most mischievous work of the devil?

Your doctrine of the necessary continuance of indwelling sin in all faithful believers, traduces not only the Son of man, but also the adorable Trinity. The Father gives his only begotten Son, his Isaac, to be crucified, that the ram, *sin*, may be offered up and slain: but you insinuate that the life of that cursed ram is secured by a decree, which allots it the heart of all believers for a safe retreat, and a warm stable, so long as we are in this world. You represent the Son as an almighty Saviour, who offers to make us free from sin; and yet appoints, that the galling yoke of indwelling sin shall remain tied to, and bound upon our very hearts for life. Ye describe the Holy Ghost as a sanctifier, who applies Christ's all-cleansing blood to the believer's heart; filling it with the oil of holiness and gladness: and yet ye suppose, that our hearts must necessarily remain desperately wicked, and full of indwelling sin! Is it right to pour contempt upon christianity, by charging such inconsistencies upon Father, Son, and Holy Ghost?

It can hardly be expected, that those who thus misrepresent their God, should do their neighbour justice. Hence the liberty which ye take, to fix a blot upon the most holy characters. What have the prophets and apostles done to you, that ye should represent them, not only as men who had a heart partly evil to the last, but also as advocates for the necessary indwelling of sin in all believers till death? And why do ye so eagerly take your advantage of holy Paul in particular, and catch at a figurative mode of speech, to insinuate, that he was a carnal wretch, sold under sin, even when he expected a crown of righteousness at the hand of his righteous judge, for having finished his course with the just men made perfect?—Nay, what have we done

to you, that ye should endeavour to take from us the greatest comfort we have in fighting against the remains of sin? Why will ye deprive us of the pleasing and purifying hope of taking the *Jericho* which we compass, and killing the *Goliath* whom we attack?—And what has indwelling sin done for you, that ye should still plead for the propriety of its continuance in our hearts? Is it not the root of all outward sin, and the spring of all the streams of iniquity, which carry desolation through every part of the globe? If ye hate the fruit, why do ye so eagerly contend for the necessary continuance of the root? And if ye favour godliness [for many of you undoubtedly do] why do you put such a conclusive argument as this into the mouths of the wicked: “These good men contend for the propriety of *indwelling sin*, that grace may abound: and why should we not plead for the propriety of *outward sin* for the same important reason? Does not God approve of an honest heart, which scorns to cloke the inward iniquity with outward demureness?”

Mr. Hill has lately published an ingenious Dialogue, called, *A lash at Enthusiasm*, in which, page 26, he uses an argument against pleading for *lukewarmness*, which, with very little variation, may be retorted against his pleading for *indwelling sin*. “Suffer me, says he, to put the sentiments of such persons [as plead for the middle way of lukewarmness] into the form of a prayer, which we may suppose would run in some such expressions as the following. O Lord, thy word requires that I should love thee with all my heart, with all my mind, with all my soul, and with all my strength, that I should renounce the world,” [and *indwelling sin*] “and should present myself as an holy, reasonable, and lively sacrifice unto thee; but Lord these are such over righteous extremes,” [and such heights of *sinless perfection*] “as I cannot away with: therefore grant that thy love, and a moderate share of

of the love of the world" [or of *indwelling sin*] "may both reign" [or at least continue] "in my heart at once. I ask it for Jesus Christ's sake, Amen."— Mr. Hill justly adds, "Now, dear Madam, if you are shocked at such a petition, consider that it is the exact language of your own heart, whilst you can plead for what you call the *middle way of religion*." And I beg leave to take up his own argument, and to add with equal propriety, "Now, dear Sirs, if you are shocked at such a petition, consider that it is the exact language of your own hearts, whilst ye can plead for what ye call *indwelling sin*, or the remains of sin."

Nor can I see what ye get by such a conduct. The excruciating thorn of indwelling sin sticks in your hearts: we assert that Christ *can* and *will* extract it, if ye plead his promise of sanctifying you wholly, in soul, body, and spirit. But ye say, "This cannot be: the thorn *must* stay in, till death extract it: and the leprosy *shall* cleave to the walls till the house is demolished." Just as if Christ, by radically cleansing the lepers in the days of his flesh, had not given repeated proofs of the absurdity of your argument! Just as if part of the gospel was not, *The lepers are cleansed*, and *If the Son make you free, ye shall be free indeed!*

If ye get nothing in pleading for christian imperfection, permit me to tell you what you lose by it, and what ye might get by steadily going on to perfection.

(1) If ye earnestly aimed at christian perfection, ye would have a bright testimony in your own soul, that you are sincere, and that ye walk agreeable to your baptismal engagements. I have already observed, that *some* of the most pious Calvinists doubt, if those who do not pursue christian perfection are christians at all. Hence it follows, that the more earnestly you pursue it, the stronger will be your confidence, that you are upright christians:

tians: and when ye shall be perfected in love, ye shall have that evidence of your sincerity, which will perfectly cast out servile fear which hath torment, and nourish the filial fear which has safety and delight. It is hard to conceive how we can constantly enjoy the full assurance of faith out of the state of christian perfection. For so long as a christian inwardly breaks Christ's evangelical law, he is justly condemned in his own conscience. If his heart does not condemn him for it, it is merely because he is asleep in the lap of Antinomianism. On the other hand, says St. John, *If our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things that make for our condemnation.* But if we love indeed and in truth, which none but the perfect do at all times, hereby we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before him, 1 John iii. 19, 20.

(2) The perfect christian, who has left all to follow Christ, is peculiarly near and dear to God. He is, if I may use the expression, one of God's favourites; and his prayers are remarkably answered. This will appear to you indubitable, if ye can receive the testimony of these who are perfected in obedient love. Beloved, say they, *whatsoever we ask, we receive of him; because we keep his commandments, and do those things which are pleasing in his sight;* that is, because we are perfected in obedient love, 1 John iii. 22. This peculiar blessing ye lose by despising christian perfection. Nay, so great is the union which subsists between God and the perfect members of his Son, that it is compared to dwelling in God, and having God dwelling in us in such a manner, that the Father, the Son, and the Comforter are said to make their abode with us. At that day [when ye shall be perfected in one] ye shall know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you.—*If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him; and we will come to him, and make our abode with him,* John

xiv. 20, 23.—Again: *He that keepeth God's commandments dwelleth in God and God in him*, 1 John iii. 24.—*Ye are my [dearest] friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you*: [i. e. if ye attain the perfection of your dispensation] John xv. 14.—Once more: *Keep my commandments, and I will pray the Father and he shall give you another Comforter that he may abide with you for ever*, John xiv. 15, 16. From these scriptures it appears, that, under every dispensation, the perfect, or they who keep the commandments, have unspeakable advantages, from which the lovers of imperfection debar themselves.

(3) Ye bring far less glory to God in the state of indwelling sin, than ye would do if ye were perfected in love; for perfect christians [all things being equal] glorify God more than those who remain full of inbred iniquity. Hence it is, that in the very chapter where our Lord so strongly presses christian perfection upon his disciples, he says, *Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven*, Matt. v. 16.—For, *Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit*, John xv. 8. It is true that the fruit of the perfect is not always relished by men, who judge only according to appearances: but God, who judges righteous judgment, finds it rich and precious: and therefore the two mites which the poor widow gave with a cheerful and perfect heart, were more precious in his account, and brought him more glory, than all the money which the imperfect worshippers cast into treasury, though some of them cast in much. Hence also our Lord commanded that the work of perfect love, which Mary wrought, when she anointed his feet for his burial, should be told for a memorial of her, wherever this [the christian] gospel should be preached in the whole world. Such is the honour, which the Lord puts upon the branches in him that bear fruit to perfection!

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(4) The perfect christian [all things being equal] is a more useful member of society than the imperfect. Never will ye be such humble men, such good parents, such dutiful children, such loving brothers, such loyal subjects, such kind neighbours, such indulgent husbands, and such faithful friends, as when ye shall have obtained the perfect sincerity of obedience. Ye will then, in your degree, have the simplicity of the gentle dove, the patience of the laborious ox, the courage of the magnanimous lion, and the wisdom of the wary serpent, without any of its poison. In your little sphere of action ye will abound in the work of faith, the patience of hope, and the labour of love, far more than ye did before: for a field properly weeded, and cleared from briars, is naturally more fruitful than one, which is shaded by spreading brambles, or filled with the indwelling roots of noxious weeds; it being a capital mistake of the spiritual husbandman, who till the Lord's field in mystical Geneva, to suppose that the plant of humility thrives best, when the roots of indwelling sins are twisted around its roots.

(5) None but just men made perfect are meet to be made partakers of the inheritance among the saints in light; an inheritance this, which no man is fit for, till he has purified himself from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit. If modern divines therefore, assure you, that a believer, full of indwelling sin, has a full title to heaven, believe them not; for the Holy Ghost has said, that the believer who breaks the law of liberty in one point, is guilty of all, and that no defilement shall enter into heaven: and our Lord himself has assured us, that the pure in heart shall see God, and that they who were ready for that sight, went in with the bridegroom to the marriage feast of the Lamb. And who is ready? Undoubtedly the believer whose lamp is trimmed, and burning. But is a spiritual lamp trimmed, when its flame is darkened by the black fungus of indwelling sin? Again:

who shall be saved into glory, but the man whose heart is washed from iniquity? But is that heart washed, which continues full of indwelling corruption? Woe be therefore to the heathens, jews, and christians, who trifle away the accepted time, and die out of a state of heathen, jewish, or christian perfection! They have no chance of going to heaven, but through the purgatory preached by the heathens, the papists, and the Calvinists. And should the notions of these purgatories be groundless, it unavoidably follows, that unpurged or imperfect souls must, at death, rank with the unready souls, whom our Lord calls foolish virgins, and against whom the door of heaven will be shut. How awful is this consideration, my dear brethren! How should it make us stretch every nerve till we have attained the perfection of our dispensation! I would not encourage tormenting fears in an unscriptural manner; but I should rejoice if all who call Jesus, Lord, would mind his solemn declarations: *I say unto you, my friends, Be not afraid of them that kill the body, &c. but I will forewarn you whom you shall fear: fear him, who after he hath killed, hath power to cast into hell: yea I say unto you, fear him, who will burn in the fire of wrath, those who harbour the indwelling man of sin, lest he should be utterly consumed by the fire of love.*

Should ye cry out against this doctrine, and ask if all imperfect christians are in a *damnable state?* We reply that so long as a christian believer sincerely presses after christian perfection, he is safe; because he is in the way of duty, and were he to die at midnight, before midnight God would certainly bring him to christian perfection, or bring christian perfection to him; for we are confident of this very thing, that he who hath begun a good work in them, will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ, because they work out their own salvation with fear and trembling. But if a believer falls, loiters, and rests upon former experiences: depending upon a self-made,

made, pharisaical perfection ; our chief message to him is that of St. Paul, *Awake thou that sleepest,— Awake to righteousness and sin not, for thou hast not the heart-purifying knowledge of God, which is eternal life. Arise from the dead ; call for oil, and Christ will give the light.* Otherwise thou shalt share the dreadful fate of the lukewarm Laodiceans, and of the foolish virgins, whose lamps went out, instead of shining more and more to the perfect day.

(6) This is not all : as ye will be fit for judgment, and a glorious heaven, when ye shall be perfected in love ; so you will actually enjoy a gracious heaven in your own soul. You will possess within you the kingdom of God, which consists in settled righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. But so long as ye neglect christian perfection, and continue hold under indwelling sin, ye not only risk the loss of the heaven of heavens, but ye lose a little heaven upon earth : for perfect christians are so full of peace and love, that they triumph in Christ, with joy unspeakable and full of glory, and rejoice in tribulation with a patience which has its perfect work. Yea, they count it all joy when they fall into divers trials ; and such is their deadness to the world, that they are exceeding glad, when men say all manner of evil of them falsely for Christ's sake. How desirable is such a state ! And who, but the blessed above, can enjoy a happiness superior to that of him who can say, *I am ready to be offered up.* The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law ; but, *O death, where is thy sting ? Not in my heart, since the righteousness of the law is fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the spirit ;—Not in my mind, for to be spiritually minded is life and peace.* Now this peculiar happiness ye lose, so long as ye continue imperfect christians.

(7) But, supposing a christian, who dies in a state of christian imperfection, can escape damnation, and make shift to get to heaven ; it is certain that he cannot go into the glorious mansion of perfect

fect christians, nor shine among the stars of the first magnitude. The wish of my soul is, that, if God's wisdom has so ordered it, imperfect christians may one day rank among perfect jews, or perfect heathens. But even upon this supposition, what will they do with their indwelling sin? For a perfect gentile, and a perfect jew, are *without guile* according to their light, as well as a perfect christian. Lean not then to the doctrine of the propriety, and continuance of indwelling sin till death;—a doctrine this, on which a *Socrates* or a *Melchisedec*, would be afraid to venture his heathen perfection, and eternal salvation. On the contrary, by christian perfection ye may rise to the brightest crown of righteousness, and *shine like the sun in the kingdom of your Father*. O for a noble ambition to obtain one of the *first seats in glory*! O for a constant, evangelical striving, to have the most abundant entrance ministered unto you into the kingdom of God! O for a throne among these peculiarly redeemed saints, who *sing the new song, which none can learn but themselves!* It is not Christ's to give those exalted thrones out of mere distinguishing grace: no; they may be forfeited: for they shall be given to those for whom they are prepared; and they are prepared for them, who [evangelically-speaking] are *worthy*. They shall walk with me in white, for they are worthy, says Christ: and they shall sit at my right hand, and at my left in my kingdom, who shall be worthy of that honour: for them that honour me, says the Lord, I will honour.—Behold I come quickly: my reward is with me, and I will render to every man according to his works. And what reward, think ye, will Christ give you, O my dear mistaken brethren, if he finds you still passing jets upon the doctrine of christian perfection, which he so strongly recommends?—Still pleading for the continuance of indwelling sin, which he so greatly abhors? *Evil envirp to sinst bct evill*

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(8) Your whole system of indwelling sin and imputed perfection stands upon two of the most dangerous and false maxims which were ever advanced. The first, which begets antinomian presumption, runs thus, "Sin cannot destroy us either in this world or in the world to come;" and the second which is productive of antinomian despair is, "Sins cannot be destroyed in this world." O how hard is it for those who worship where these Syren-songs pass for sweet songs of Sion, not to be drawn into one of these fatal conclusions? "What need is there of attacking sin with so much eagerness, since, even in the name of the Lord, I cannot destroy it? And why should I resist it with so much watchfulness, since my eternal life and salvation are absolutely secured, and the most poisonous cup of iniquity cannot destroy me, though I should drink of it every day for months or years?"—If ye fondly think, that you can neither go backward into a sinful, cursed Egypt, nor yet go forward into a sinless, holy Canaan: how natural will it be for you to say, *Soul, take thy ease, and rest awhile in this wilderness on the pillow of self-imputed perfection?* Oh! how many are surprised by the midnight cry in this Laodicean rest! What numbers meet death with a solidarian *Lord!* *Lord!* in their mouths, and with *indwelling sin* in their hearts! And how inexpressible will be our horror, if we perceive our want of holiness, and christian perfection, only when it will be too late to attain them! To conclude:

(9) Indwelling sin is not only the *sting of death*, but the very hell of hells, if I may use the expression: for a sinless saint in a *local hell*, would dwell in a holy, loving God; and, of consequence, in a *spiritual heaven*: like Shadrach in Nebuchadnezzar's fiery furnace, he might have devouring flames cutting about him; but, within him, he would still have the flame of divine love, and the joy of a good conscience. But so much of *indwelling sin* as

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we carry about us, so much of *indwelling hell*;—so much of the sting, which pierces the damned;—so much of the spiritual fire, which will burn up the wicked;—so much of the never-dying worm, which will prey upon them;—so much of the dreadful instrument, which will rack them;—so much of Satan's image, which will frighten them:—so much of the characteristic, by which the devil's children shall be distinguished from the children of God;—so much of the black mark, whereby the goats shall be separated from the sheep. To plead therefore for the continuance of *indwelling sin*, is no better than to plead for keeping in your hearts one of the sharpest stings of death, and one of the hottest coals in hell-fire. On the other hand, to attain christian perfection is to have the least feature of Belial's image erased from your loving souls, the last bit of the sting of death extracted from your composed breasts, and the last spark of hell-fire extinguished in your peaceful bosoms. It is to enter into the spiritual rest, which remains on earth for the people of God;—a delightful rest this, where you soul will enjoy a calm, in the midst of outward storms; and where your spirit will no longer be tossed by the billows of swelling pride, dissatisfied avarice, pining envy, disappointed hopes, fruitless cares, dubious anxiety, turbulent anger, fretting impatience, and racking unbelief. It is to enjoy that even state of mind, in which all things will work together for your good. There your love will bear its excellent fruits during the sharpest winter of affliction, as well as in the finest summer of prosperity. There you will be more and more settled in peaceful humility. There you will continually grow in a holy familiarity with the friend

of penitent sinners; and your prospect of eternal felicity will brighten every day.

Innumerable are the advantages which established, perfect christians have over carnal, unsettled believers, who continue sold under indwelling sin. And will ye despise those blessings to your dying day, O ye prejudiced imperfectionists? Will ye secure to yourselves the contrary curses? Nay, will ye entail them upon the generations which are yet unborn, by continuing to print, preach, or argue for the continuance of indwelling sin, the capital woe belonging to the devil and his angels? God forbid! We hope better things from you; not doubting but the error of several of you lies chiefly in your judgment and springs from a misunderstanding of the question, rather than from a malicious opposition to that holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord. With pleasure we remember, and follow St. Jude's loving direction: *of some [the simple-hearted, who are seduced into antinomianism] have compassion; making a difference: and others [the bigots and obstinate seducers, who wilfully shut their eyes against the truth] save with fear: hating even the garment spotted by the flesh:* although they will not be ashamed to plead for the continuance of a desiling fountain of carnality in the very heart of all God's people. We are fully persuaded, my dear brethren, that we should wrong you, if we did not acknowledge, that many of you have a sincere desire to be saved by Christ into all

* If the arguments and expostulations contained in these sheets are rational and scriptural; is not Mr. Wesley in the right, when he says, that "All Preachers should make a point, of preaching perfection to believers, constantly, strongly, and explicitly?" And that "All believers should mind this one thing, and continually agonize for it?" And do not all the ministers, who preach against christian perfection, preach against the perfection of christianity, oppose holiness, resist the sanctifying truth as it is in Jesus, recommend an unscriptural purgatory, plead for sin, instead of striving against it, and delude imperfect christians into Laodicean ease?

purity of heart and life; and with regard to such imperfectionists, our chief complaint is, that their desire is not according to knowledge.

If others of you, of a different stamp, should laugh at these pages; and [still producing banter instead of argument] should continue to say, "Where are your perfect christians? Shew us but one, and we will believe your doctrine of perfection;" I shall just put them in mind of St. Peter's awful prophecy: *Know this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers walking after their own [indwelling] lusts, and saying, Where is the promise of his spiritual coming [to make an end of sin, thoroughly to purge his floor, and to burn the chaff with unquenchable fire?]* For since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning: all believers are still carnal and sold under sin as well as father Paul.—And if such mockers continue to display their prejudice by such taunts, I shall take the liberty to shew them their own picture, by pointing at those prejudiced professors of old, who said, concerning the most perfect of all, the perfect, "What sign shewest thou, that we may receive thy doctrine? Come down from the cross, and we will believe." O the folly and danger of such scoffs! "Blessed is he that sitteth not in this seat of the scornful, and maketh much of them that fear the Lord. Yea, he is blessed next to them who are undefiled [perfect] in the way, who walk in the law of the Lord, keep his testimonies, and seek him with their whole heart," Psal. cxix. 1, 2.

Should ye ask: "To what purpose do you make all this ado about christian perfection? Do those who maintain this doctrine live more holy and useful lives than other believers?" I answer:

(1) Every thing being equal, they undoubtedly do, if they hold not the truth in unrighteousness; for the best principles, when they are cordially embraced, will always produce the best practices.

—But

—But alas! too many merely contend for christian perfection in a speculative, systematical manner. They recommend it to others with their lips, as a point of doctrine which makes a part of their religious system; instead of following after it with their hearts, as a blessing which they must attain, if they will not be found as unprepared for judgment as the foolish virgins. These perfectionists are, so far, hypocrites; nor should their fatal inconsistency make us despise the truth which they contend for, any more than the conduct of thousands, who contend for the truth of the scriptures, while they live in full opposition to the scriptures, ought to make us despise the Bible.

(2) On the other hand, some gracious persons [like the pious and *inconsistent Antinomians*, whom I have described in the preceding Checks] speak against christian perfection with their lips, but cannot help following hard after it with their hearts; and while they do so, they sometimes attain the thing, although they continue to quarrel with the name. These perfect imperfectionists undoubtedly adorn the gospel of Christ far more than the imperfect, hypocritical perfectionists, whom I have just described! and God, who looks at the simplicity of the heart more than at the consistency of the judgment, pities their mistakes and accepts their works.

—But (3.) Some there are, who both maintain doctrinally and practically the necessity of a perfect devotedness of ourselves to God. They hold the truth, and they hold it in wisdom and righteousness: their tempers and conduct enforce it, as well as their words and profession. And, on this account, they have a great advantage over the two preceding classes of professors. Reason and revelation jointly crown the orthodoxy and faithfulness of these *perfect perfectionists*, who neither strengthen the hands of the wicked, nor excite the wonder of the judicious, by absurdly pleading for indwelling

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sin with their lips, while they strive to work righteousness with their hands and hearts.—If ye candidly weigh this three-fold distinction, I doubt not but ye will blame the *irrational inconsistency* of *holy imperfectionists*, condemn the *immoral inconsistency* of *unholy perfectionists*, and agree with me, that the most excellent christian is a *consistent, holy perfectionist*.

And now, my dear, mistaken brethren, take in good part these plain solutions, expostulations, and reproofs: and give glory to God by believing that he *can* and *will* yet save you to the uttermost from your evil tempers, if ye humbly come to him by Christ. Day and night ask of him the new heart, which *keeps the commandments*; and when ye shall have received it [if you keep it with all diligence] sin shall no more pollute it than it pollutteth our Lord's soul, when he said, *If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love.* Burn in the mean time the unhallowed pens, and bridle the rash tongues, with which ye have pleaded for the continuance of sin till death. Honour us with the right hand of fellowship; and, like reconciled brethren, let us at every opportunity lovingly fall upon our knees together, to implore the help of him, who *can do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think.* Nor let us give him any rest, till he has perfected all our souls in the *charity* which *rejoiceth in the truth without prejudice,* in the obedience which keeps the commandments without reserve, and in the perseverance which finds that *in keeping of them there is great reward.*

Nothing but such a conduct as this, can remove the stumbling blocks, which the contentions ye breed have laid in the way of a deistical world. When the men whom your mistakes have hardened, will see you listen to scripture and reason, who knows but their prejudices may subside, and some of them may yet say, “See the good which arises

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from friendly controversy ! See how these christians desire to be *perfected in one* ? They now understand one another. Babylonish confusion is at an end ; evangelical truth prevails ; and love, the most delicious fruit of truth, visibly grows to christian perfection." — God grant that [through the concurrence of your candor] this may soon be the language of all those, whom the bigotry of professors has confirmed in their prejudices against christianity.

Should this plain address have so far worked upon you, my dear brethren, as to abate the force of your aversion to the doctrine of pure love, or to stagger your unaccountable faith in a death-purgatory ; and should you seriously ask which is the way to christian perfection, I intreat you to pass on to the next section, where, I hope, you will find a scriptural answer to some important questions, which, I trust, a few of you are by this time ready to propose.

SECTION XIX.

An Address to imperfect Believers, who cordially embrace the doctrine of christian perfection.

YOUR regard for scripture and reason, and your desire to answer the end of God's *Predestination*, by being conformed to the image of his Son, have happily kept, or reclaimed you from the Antinomianism exposed in these sheets.

Ye see the absolute necessity of personally fulfilling the law of Christ : your bosom glows with desire to perfect holiness in the fear of God : and far

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from blushing to be called *perfectionists*, ye openly assert, that a perfect faith productive of perfect love to God and man, is the pearl of great price, for which you are determined to sell all, and which (next to Christ) you will seek early and late, as the one thing needful for your spiritual and eternal welfare. Some directions therefore, about the manner of seeking this pearl cannot but be acceptable to you, if they are scriptural and rational; and such, I humbly trust, are those which follow.

I. First, if ye would attain an evangelically-sinless perfection, let your full assent to the truth of that deep doctrine firmly stand upon the evangelical foundation of a *precept* and a *promise*. A precept without a promise would not sufficiently animate you: nor would a promise without a precept properly bind you: but a *divine precept*, and a *divine promise* form an unshaken foundation might. Let then your faith deliberately rest her right foot upon these *precepts*.

"Hear, O Israel—thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might, Deut. vi. 5"—"Thou shalt not hate thy neighbour in thy heart: thou shalt in any wise rebuke thy neighbour, and not suffer sin upon him. Thou shalt not avenge, nor bear any grudge against the children of thy people: but thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself: I am the Lord: ye shall keep my statutes, Lev. xix. 17, 18."—"And now, Israel, what does the Lord thy God require of thee, but to fear the Lord thy God, to walk in his ways, and to love him, and to serve the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, to keep the commandments of the Lord thy God, and his statutes, which I command thee this day for thy good, &c. Circumcise therefore the foreskin of your heart, and be no more stiff-necked, Deut. x. 12, &c."—"Serve God with a perfect heart, and a willing mind: for the Lord searcheth all

all hearts, and understandeth the imaginations of the thoughts, 1 Chron. xxviii. 9."—

Should unbelief suggest, that these are only Old Testament-injunctions, trample upon the false suggestion, and rest the same foot of your faith upon the following New-Testament-precepts " think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets. —I say unto you, Love your enemies: bless them that curse you: do good to them that hate you, &c. that ye may be the children of your Father who is in heaven, &c. For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? Do not even the publicans the same? —Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect, Mat. v. 17. 44," &c.—If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments, Mat. xiv. 17."—" Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ, Gal. vi. 2."—" This is my commandment, that ye love one another as I have loved you, John xv. 12."—" He that loveth another hath fulfilled the law: for this, Thou shalt not commit adultery, &c. Thou shalt not covet, and if there be any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. Love worketh no ill, &c. therefore, love is the fulfilling of the law, Rom. xiii. 8. 10."—" This commandment we have from him, that he who loves God, love his brother also, 1 John iv. 21."—" If ye fulfil the royal law, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself, ye do well. But, if ye have respect to persons, ye commit sin, and are convinced of the law as transgressors, Jam. ii. 8. 9."—" Circumcision is nothing, uncircumcision is nothing [comparatively speaking] but [under Christ] the keeping of the commandments of God [is the one thing needful] 1 Cor. vii. 19."—For, " The end of the commandment is charity; out-of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned, 1 Tim. 5."—" Though I have all faith, &c. and have not charity, I am nothing, 1 Cor.

xiii. 2."—" Whosoever shall keep the whole law [of liberty] and yet offend in one point, [in uncharitable respect of persons] he is guilty of all, &c. So speak ye, and so do, as they that shall be judged by the law of liberty, [which requires perfect love, and therefore makes no allowance for the least degree of uncharitableness,] James ii. 10. 12."

When the right foot of your faith stands on these evangelical precepts and proclamations; lest she should stagger for want of a promise every way adequate to such weighty commandments, let her place her left foot upon the following promises, which are extracted from the Old Testament. "The Lord thy God will circumcise thine heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, that thou mayest live, Deut. xxx. 6."—" Come now, and let us reason together, says the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow: though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool, Isa. i. 18." That this promise chiefly refers to sanctification is evident, (1) From the verses which immediately precede it " Make you clean, &c. Cease to do evil, learn to do well," &c. And (2) From the verses which immediately follow it, " If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land; but if ye refuse and rebel [or disobey] ye shall be devoured with the sword."— Again: " I will give them an heart to know me, that I am the Lord, and they shall be my people, and I will be their God [in a new and peculiar manner:] for they shall return unto me with their whole heart.—This shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel. After those days, saith the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts, and will be their God, and they shall be my people, Jer. xxiv. 7.—xxxii. 33."—" Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean, from all your filthiness and from all your idols will I cleanse

cleanse you: a new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will put away the heart of stone out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments and do them, Ez. xxv. 27."

And let no body suppose, that the promises of the circumcision, the cleansing, the clean water, and the Spirit, which are mentioned in these scriptures, and by which the hearts of believers are to be made new, and God's law is to be so written therein, that they shall keep his judgments and do them:—Let none, I say, suppose that these glorious promises belong only to the Jews; for their full accomplishment peculiarly refers to the christian dispensation. Besides, if Sprinkling of the spirit were sufficient, under the jewish dispensation, to raise the plant of jewish perfection in jewish believers; how much more will the revelation of the horn of our salvation, and the outpourings of the Spirit, raise the plant of christian perfection in faithful, christian believers! And, that this revelation of Christ, in the spirit, as well as in the flesh, these effusions of the water of life, these baptisms of fire, which burn up the chaff of sin, thoroughly purge God's spiritual floor, save us from all our uncleannesses, and deliver us from all our enemies;—that these blessings, I say, are peculiarly promised to christians, is demonstrable by the following cloud of New-Testament declarations and promises.

" Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for he hath raised up an horn of salvation for us,—as he spake by the mouth of his holy prophets,—that we, being delivered out of the hands of our enemies, might serve him without [unbelieving] fear, [that is, with perfect love] in holiness and righteousness before him, all the days of our life, Luke i. 68. 75."—" Blessed are the poor in spirit,—who thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled, Mat. v.

8. 6."—“If thou knewest the gift of God, &c. thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water:—And the water that I shall give him, shall be in him a well of water springing up to everlasting life, John iv. 10, 14.”—“Jesus stood and cried, saying: If any man thirst, let him come to me and drink. He that believeth on me, [when I shall have ascended up on high, to receive gifts for men] out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water [to cleanse his soul, and to keep it clean.] But this he spake of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive; for the Holy Ghost was not yet given [in such a manner as to raise the plant of christian perfection] because Jesus was not yet glorified, and his spiritual dispensation was not yet fully opened, John vii. 37, &c.” Mr. Wesley, in his *Ptain Account of christian Perfection*, has published some excellent queries, and proposed them to those who deny perfection to be attainable in this life. They are close to the point, and therefore the two first attack the Imperfectionists from the very ground on which I want you to stand. They run thus: (1) “Has there not been a larger measure of the Holy Spirit given under the gospel, than under the jewish dispensation? If not, in what sense was the Spirit not given before Christ was glorified? John vii. 39.”—(2) Was that “glory which followed the sufferings of Christ, 1 Pet. i. 11, an external glory, or an internal, viz. the glory of holiness?” Always rest the doctrine of christian perfection, on this scriptural foundation, and it will stand as firm as revelation itself.

It is allowed on all sides, that the dispensation of John the Baptist exceeded that of the other prophets, because it immediately introduced the gospel of Christ, and because John was not only appointed to preach the baptism of repentance, but also clearly to point out the very person of Christ, and to give knowledge of salvation to God’s people by the remission of

f sin, Luke i. 77 : and nevertheless, John only promised the blessing of the spirit, which Christ bestowed when he had received gifts for men. I indeed, said John, baptize you with water unto repentance ; but he that cometh after me is mightier than I,—He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire, Mat. iii. 11. Such is the importance of this promise, that it is particularly recorded not only by the three other evangelists [See Mark i. 8. Luke iii. 16. and John i. 26.] but also by our Lord himself, who said just before his ascension, *John truly baptized with water, but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence, Acts i. 5.*

So capital is this promise of the Spirit's stronger influences to raise the rare plant of christian perfection, that when our Lord speaks of this promise, he emphatically calls it *The promise of the Father*; because it shines among the other promises of the gospel of Christ, as the moon does among the stars. Thus, *Acts i. 4, Wait, says he, for the promise of the Father, which ye have heard of me.* And again, *Luke xxiv. 49, Behold I send the promise of my Father upon you.* Agreeably to this, St. Peter says, *Jesus being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he has shed forth this :—He has begun abundantly to fulfil that which was spoken by the prophet Joel, And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, that I will pour out [bestow a more abundant measure] of my spirit upon all flesh.—Therefore repent and be baptized [i. e. make an open profession of your faith] in the name of the Lord Jesus, for the remission of sins : and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost : for the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to as many as the Lord our God shall call [to enjoy the full blessings of the christian dispensation,] Acts ii. 17. 33. 38.* This promise [when it is received in its fulness] is undoubtedly the greatest of all the exceedingly great and precious promises, which are given to us, that by them you might be

be partakers of the divine nature [that is, of pure love and unmixed holiness,] 2 Pet. i. 4. Have therefore a peculiar eye to it, and to these deep words of our Lord, “I will ask the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever, even the Spirit of truth [and power] whom the world knows not, &c. but ye know him, for he remaineth with you, and shall be in you.—At that day ye shall know, that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you:—For, If any man [i. e. any believer] love me, he will keep my words, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him, and make our abode with him, John xiv. 19. 23:” “Which,” says Mr. Wesley, in his note on the place, “implies such a large manifestation of the divine presence and love, that the former in justification, is as nothing in comparison of it.” Agreeable to this, the same judicious divine expresses himself thus in another of his publications: “These virtues [meekness, humility, and true resignation to God] are the only *wedding garment*; they are the *lamps* and *vessels* well furnished with oil. There is nothing that will do instead of them: they must have their *full* and *perfect* work in you, or the soul can never be delivered from its fallen, wrathful state. There is no possibility of salvation but in this. And when the Lamb of God has brought forth his own meekness, &c. in our souls, then are our lamps trimmed, and our virgin-hearts made ready for the marriage feast. This marriage feast signifies the entrance into the highest state of union, that can be between God and the soul in this life. This birth-day of the spirit of love in our souls, whenever we attain, will feast our souls with such peace and joy in God, as will blot out the remembrance of every thing that we called peace, or joy before.”

To make you believe this important promise with more ardour, consider that our Lord spent some of his last moments in sealing it with his powerful intercession. After having prayed the Father to sanctify

sanctify his disciples through the truth, firmly embraced by their faith, and powerfully applied by his spirit, he adds, *neither pray I for these alone, but for them, who will believe on me through their word.* And what is it that our Lord asks for these believers? Truly what St. Paul asked for the imperfect believers at Corinth, *even their perfection,* 2 Cor. xiii. 9. A state of soul this, which Christ describes thus: *That they all may be one, as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they may be made one in us,* &c. *that they may be one, as we are one: I in them, and thou in me, that they may be perfected in one, and that the world may know, that thou hast loved them as thou hast loved me,* John xvii. 17. 23. Our Lord could not pray in vain: it is not to be supposed, that the scriptures are silent with respect to the effect of this solemn prayer, an answer to which was to give the world an idea of the new Jerusalem coming down from heaven—a specimen of the power, which introduces believers into the state of christian perfection, and therefore we read, that, on the day of pentecost, the kingdom of Satan was powerfully shaken, and the kingdom of God, [righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost] began to come with a new power: then were thousands wonderfully converted, and clearly justified: then was the kingdom of heaven taken by force; and the love of Christ, and of the brethren, began to burn the chaff of selfishness and sin with a force which the world had never seen before. See Acts ii. 42, &c.—Some time after, another glorious baptism, or capital outpouring of the Spirit carried believers farther into the kingdom of the grace, which perfects them in one. And therefore we find, that the account which St. Luke gives us of them after this second, capital manifestation of the Holy Spirit, in a great degree answers to our Lord's prayer for their perfection. He had asked that they all might be one—that they might be one as the Father and he are one,—and that they might be perfected in one, John xvii.

27, &c. And now a fuller answer is given to his deep request. Take it in the words of the inspired historian : *And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together, and they were [once more] filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the word with [still greater] boldness ; and the multitude of them that believed were of one heart, and of one soul ; neither said any of them, that ought of the things which he possessed were his own ; but they had all things common, &c. and great grace was upon them all, Acts iv. 31. 33.* Who does not see in this account a specimen of that grace, which our Lord had asked for believers, when he had prayed, that his disciples, and those who would believe on him through their word, might be perfected in one ?

It may be asked here, whether the multitude of them that believed in those happy days, were all perfect in love ? I answer, that, if pure love had cast out all selfishness and sinful fear from their hearts, they were undoubtedly made perfect in love ; but as God does not usually remove the plague of indwelling sin till it has been discovered and lamented ; and as we find in the two next chapters, an account of the guile of Ananias and his wife, and of the partiality or selfish murmuring of some believers, it seems that those chiefly, who before were strong in the grace of their dispensation, arose then into sinless fathers ; and that the first love of other believers [through the peculiar blessing of Christ upon his infant-church] was so bright and powerful for a time, that little children had, or seemed to have the strength of young men, and young men the grace of fathers. And, in this case, the account which St. Luke gives of the primitive believers, ought to be taken with some restriction. Thus, while many of them were perfect in love, many might have the imperfection of their love only covered over by a land flood of peace and joy in believing. And, in this case, what is said of their being all of one heart and

and mind, and of their having all things common, &c. may only mean, that the harmony of love had not yet been broken, and that none had yet betrayed any of the uncharitableness for which christians in after ages became so conspicuous. With respect to the great grace which was upon them all, this does not necessarily mean that they were all equally strong in grace, for great unity and happiness may rest upon a whole family, where the difference between a father, a young man, and a child, continues to subsist. However it is not improbable, that God, to open the dispensation of the Spirit in a manner, which might fix the attention of all ages upon its importance and glory, permitted the whole body of believers to take an extraordinary turn together into the Canaan of perfect love, and to shew the world the admirable fruit which grows there, as the spies sent by Joshua took a turn into the good land of promise before they were settled in it, and brought from thence the bunch of grapes which astonished, and spirited up the Israelites, who had not yet crossed Jordan.

Upon the whole, it is [I think] undeniable, from the four first chapters of the Acts, that a peculiar power of the Spirit is bestowed upon believers under the gospel of Christ ; that this power, through faith on our part, can operate the most sudden and surprising change in our souls ; and that, when our faith shall fully embrace the promise of full sanctification, or of a complete circumcision of the heart in the Spirit, the Holy Ghost, who kindled so much love on the day of pentecost, that all the primitive believers loved or seemed to love each other perfectly, will not fail to help us to love one another without sinful self-seeking ; and as soon as we do so, *God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us,* 1 John iv. 12.—John xiv. 23.

Should you ask, how many baptisms, or effusions of the sanctifying Spirit are necessary to cleanse a believer

believer from all sin, and to kindle his soul into perfect love : I reply, that the effect of a sanctifying truth, depending upon the *ardour* of the faith with which that truth is embraced, and upon the power of the Spirit with which it is applied, I should betray a want of modesty, if I brought the operations of the Holy Ghost, and the energy of faith, under a rule which is not expressly laid down in scripture. If you ask your physician, how many doses of physic you must take, before all the crudities of your stomach can be carried off, and your appetite perfectly restored ; he would probably answer you, that this depends upon the nature of those crudities, the strength of the medicine, and the manner in which your constitution will allow it to operate ; and that, in general, you must repeat the dose, as you can bear, till the remedy has fully answered the desired end. I return a similar answer : If one powerful baptism of the spirit *seals you unto the day of redemption*, and *cleanses you from all [moral] filthiness*, so much the better. If two, or more are necessary, the Lord can repeat them : *his arm is not shortened that it cannot save* : nor is his promise of the Spirit stinted : he says in general, *Whosoever will, let him come and take of the water of life freely.* — *If you, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children : how much more will your heavenly Father [who is goodness itself] give his holy [sanctifying] Spirit to them that ask him !* I may however venture to say in general, that, before we can rank among perfect christians, we must receive so much of the truth and Spirit of Christ by faith, as to have the pure love of God and man shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost given unto us, and to be filled with the meek and lowly mind which was in Christ. And if one out-pouring of the Spirit, one bright manifestation of the sanctifying truth so empties us of self, as to fill us with the mind of Christ, and with pure love, we are undoubtedly Christians in the full sense of the word. From the ground of

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my soul, I therefore subscribe to the answer which a great divine makes to the following objection :

" But some who are newly justified do come up to this [christian perfection.] What then will you say to these?"—Mr. Wesley replies with great propriety : " If they really do, I will say, they are sanctified, saved from sin in that moment : and that they never need lose what God has given, or feel sin any more. But certainly this is an exempt case. It is otherwise with the generality of those that are justified. They feel in themselves, more or less, pride, anger, self-will, and a heart bent to backsliding. And till they have gradually mortified these, they are not fully renewed in love. God usually gives a considerable time for men to receive light, to grow in grace, to do and suffer his will before they are either justified or sanctified. But he does not invariably adhere to this. Sometimes he cuts short his work. He does the work of many years in a few weeks : perhaps in a week, a day, an hour. He justifies, or sanctifies both those who have done or suffered nothing, and who have not had time for a gradual growth either in light or grace. And may he not do what he will with his own? Is thine eye evil, because he is good? It need not therefore be proved by forty texts of scripture, either that most men are perfected in love at last, or that there is a gradual work of God in the soul ; and that, generally speaking, it is a long time, even many years, before sin is destroyed. All this we know. But we know likewise, that God may, with man's good leave! cut short his work, in whatever degree he pleases, and do the usual work of many years in a moment. He does so in many instances. And yet there is a gradual work, both before and after that moment. So that one may affirm, the work is gradual; another, it is instantaneous, without any manner of contradiction." Plain Account, page 115, &c. page 135, the same eminent divine explains himself more fully, thus : " It [christian perfection]

perfection] is constantly preceded and followed by a gradual work. But is it in itself instantaneous or not? In examining this, let us go on step by step. An instantaneous change has been wrought in some believers: none can deny this. Since that change they enjoy perfect love. They feel this, and this alone. They rejoice evermore, pray without ceasing, in every thing give thanks. Now this is all that I mean by perfection. Therefore these are witnesses of the perfection which I preach."—

"But in some this change was not instantaneous."

—They did not perceive the instant when it was wrought: it is often difficult to perceive the instant when a man dies. Yet, there is an instant in which life ceases. And if ever sin ceases, there must be a last moment of its existence, and a first moment of our deliverance from it."—

"But if they have this love now, they will lose it."—

"They may; but they need not. And whether they do or no, they have it now: they now experience what we teach. They now are all love. They now rejoice, pray, and praise without ceasing."

"However, sin is only suspended in them; it is not destroyed."—

"Call it which you please. They are all love to-day; and they take no thought for the morrow."—To return:

(2) When you firmly assent to the truth of the precept and promises, on which the doctrine of Christian perfection is founded:—When you understand the meaning of these scriptures, sanctify them through thy truth, thy word is truth—I will send the Comforter, [the Spirit of truth and holiness] unto you;—God hath chosen you to [eternal] salvation through sanctification of the spirit and belief of the truth:—When you see, that the way to christian perfection is by the word of the gospel of Christ,—by faith—and by the Spirit of God; in the next place get tolerably clear ideas of this perfection. This is absolutely necessary. If you will hit a mark, you must know where it is. Some people aim at christian perfection;

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but mistaking it for *angelical perfection*, they shoot above the mark, miss it, and then peevishly give up their hopes. Others place the mark as much too low: hence it is, that you hear them profess to have attained christian perfection, when they have not so much attained the mental serenity of a philosopher, or the candor of a good-natured, conscientious heathen. In the preceding pages, if I am not mistaken, the mark is fixed according to the rules of scriptural moderation. It is not placed *so high*, as to make you despair of hitting it, if you do your best in an evangelical manner: nor yet *so low*, as to allow you to presume, that you can reach it, without exerting all your abilities to the uttermost, in due subordination to the efficacy of Jesu's blood, and the Spirit's sanctifying influences.

(3) Should you ask, "Which is the way to christian perfection? Shall we go to it by the internal stillness, agreeably to this direction of Moses and David, *The Lord will fight for you, and ye shall hold your peace; stand still and see the salvation of God.—Be still and know that I am God.*—Stand in awe and sin not: commune with your own heart upon your bed, and be still. Or shall we press after it by an internal wrestling, according to these commands of Christ, *Strive to enter in at the strait gate: the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent taketh it by force, &c.*

According to the evangelical balance of the doctrine of *free-grace* and *free-will*, I answer that the way to perfection is by the due combination of prevenient, assisting *free-grace*; and of submissive, assisted *free-will*. Antinomian stillness therefore, which says that *free grace* must do all, is not the way. Pharisaic activity, which will do most, if not all, is not the way. Join these two partial systems: allowing *free grace* the lead and high pre-eminence which it so justly claims; and you have the balance of the two gospel-axioms. You do justice to the doctrines of *mercy* and *justice*—of *free-*

grace and free-will—of divine faithfulness in keeping the covenant of grace, and of human faithfulness in laying hold on that covenant, and keeping within its bounds:—In short, you have the scripture-method of waiting upon God, which Mr. Wesley describes thus:

*Restless, resign'd, for God I wait:
For God my vehement soul stands still.*

To understand these lines, consider that *faith*, like the Virgin Mary, is alternately a *receiver* and a *beflower*: first, it *passively receives* the impregnation of divine grace, saying, *Behold the handmaid of the Lord: let it be done to me according to thy word:* and then, it *actively brings forth* its heavenly fruit with earnest labour.—*God worketh in you to will and to do,* says St. Paul: here he describes the *passive* office of *faith*, which submits to, and acquiesces in, every divine dispensation and operation.—*Therefore work out your salvation with fear and trembling, and, of consequence, with haste, diligence, ardor and faithfulness:* here the Apostle describes the *active* office of that mother-*grace*, which carefully lays out the talent she has already received. Would ye then wait aright for christian perfection? Impartially admit the gospel-axioms, and faithfully reduce them to practice. In order to this, let them meet in your hearts, as the two legs of a pair of compasses meet in the rivet, which makes them one compound instrument. Let your faith in the doctrine of *free-grace*, and Christ's righteousness, fix your mind upon God, as you fix one of the legs of your compasses immovably in the centre of the circle, which you are about to draw: so shall you stand still according to the first texts produced in the question. And then, let your faith in the doctrine of *free-will*, and evangelical obedience, make you steadily run the circle of duty around that firm centre: so shall you imitate the other leg of the

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the compasses which evenly moves around the centre, and traces the circumference of a perfect circle. By this activity subordinate to grace, you will take the kingdom of heaven by force. When your heart quietly rests in God by faith, as it steadily acts the part of a passive receiver, it resembles the leg of the compasses which rests in the centre of the circle: and then the poet's expressions, *restless*—*resigned*, describe its fixedness in God. But when your heart swiftly moves towards God by faith as it acts the part of a diligent *worker*; when your ardent soul follows after God as a thirsty deer does after the water-brooks, it may be compared to the leg of the compasses which traces the circumference of the circle; and then, these words of the poet *restless*, and *vehement*, properly belong to it. To go on steadily to perfection, you must therefore endeavour steadily to *believe*, according to the doctrine of the first gospel-axiom; and [as there is opportunity] diligently to *work*, according to the doctrine of the second: and the moment your faith is steadily fixed in God as in your centre, and your obedience swiftly moves in the circle of duty from the rest and power which you find in that centre, you have attained; you are made perfect in the faith which works by love. Your humble faith saves you from pharisaism, your obedient love from antinomianism, and both [in due subordination to Christ] constitute you a just man made perfect according to your dispensation.

(4) Another question has also puzzled many sincere Perfectionists; and the solution of it may remove a considerable hinderance out of your way. "Is christian perfection, say they, to be *instantaneously* brought down to us? Or are we *gradually* to grow up to it?—Shall we be made perfect in love by an habit of holiness suddenly infused into us, or by acts of feeble faith and feeble love so frequently repeated as to become strong, habitual, and

evangelically-natural to us, according to the well-known maxim, *A strong habit is a second nature?*"

Both ways are good; and instances of some believers gradually perfected, and of others [comparatively speaking] instantaneously fixed in perfect love, might probably be produced, if we were acquainted with the experiences of all those, who have died in a state of evangelical perfection. It may be with the root of sin, as it is with its fruit: some souls parley many years, before they can be persuaded to give up *all* their outward sins, and others part with them as it were *instantaneously*. You may compare the former to those besieged towns, which make a long resistance, or to those mothers who go through a tedious and lingering labour: and the latter resemble those fortresses, which are surprized and carried by storm; or those women, who are delivered almost as soon as labour comes upon them. Travellers informs us that vegetation is so quick and powerful in some warm climates, that the seeds of some vegetables yield a fallad in less than twenty-four hours. Should a northern philosopher say, Impossible! and should an English gardener exclaim against such *mushroom fallad*, they would only expose their prejudices, as do those who decry instantaneous justification, or mock at the possibility of the instantaneous destruction of indwelling sin.

For where is the absurdity of this doctrine? If the light of a candle brought into a dark room can instantly expel the darkness; and if, upon opening your shutters at noon, your gloomy apartment can instantaneously be filled with meridian light; why might not the instantaneous rending of the veil of unbelief, or the sudden and full opening of the eye of your faith, instantly fill your soul with the light of truth, and the fire of love; supposing the Sun of Righteousness arise upon you with powerful healing in his wings? May not the Sanctifier descend upon your waiting soul, as quickly as the spirit

spirit descended upon our Lord at his baptism? Did it not descend *as a dove*, that is, with the soft motion of a dove, which swiftly shoots down, and instantly lights? A good man said once, with truth, "A mote is little when it is compared to the sun, but I am far less before God." Alluding to this comparison I ask, If the sun could instantly kindle a mote; nay, if a burning glass can in a moment calcine a bone, and turn a stone to lime; and if the dim flame of a candle can in the twinkling of an eye destroy the flying insect which comes within its sphere, how unscriptural and irrational is it to suppose, that, when God fully baptizes a soul with his sanctifying Spirit and with the celestial fire of his love, he cannot in an instant destroy the man of sin, burn up the chaff of corruption, melt the heart of stone into a heart of flesh, and kindle the believing soul into pure seraphic love!

An appeal to parallel cases may throw some light upon the question which I answer. If you were sick, and asked of God the perfect recovery of your health, how would you look for it? Would you expect to have your strength restored to you at *once*, without any external means, as the lepers who were instantly cleansed: and as the paralytic, who, at our Lord's word, took up the bed on which he lay, and carried it away upon his shoulders? Or by using some external means of a flower operation, as the *ten lepers* did, who were more *gradually cleansed*, as they went to shew themselves to the priests: or as King Hezekiah, whose gradual, but equally sure recovery, was owing to God's blessing upon the poultice of figs prescribed by Isaiah? Again: If you were blind, and besought the Lord to give you perfect human sight; how should you wait for it? As Bartimeus, whose eyes were opened in an instant? Or as the man who received his sight by degrees. At first he saw nothing: by and by he confusedly discovered the objects before him, but at last he saw all things clearly? Would ye not earnestly

earnestly wait for an answer to your prayers now ; leaving to divine wisdom the particular manner of your recovery ? And why should ye not go and do likewise, with respect to the dreadful disorder which we call indwelling sin ?

If our hearts are purified by faith, as the scripture expressly testifies ;—it the *faith*, which peculiarly purifies the heart of christians, is a faith in the *promise of the Father*, which promise was made by the Son, and directly points at a peculiar effusion of the Holy Ghost, the purifier of spirits ;—if we may believe in a moment ;—and if God may, in a moment, seal our sanctifying faith by sending us a fulness of his sanctifying spirit ;—if this, I say, is the case ; does it not follow, that to deny the possibility of the instantaneous destruction of sin ; is to deny [contrary to scripture and matter of fact] that we can make an instantaneous act of faith in the sanctifying promise of the Father, and in the all-cleansing blood of the Son, and that God can seal that act by the instantaneous operation of his Spirit ? which St. Paul calls the *circumcision of the heart in [or by] the Spirit*, according to the Lord's ancient promise, *I will circumcise thy heart, to love the Lord thy God with all thy heart ?* Where is the absurdity of believing that the God of all grace can now give an answer to the poet's rational and evangelical request ?

Open my faith's interior eye :
Display thy glory from above :
And sinful self shall sink and die,
Lost in astonishment and love.

If a momentary display of Christ's bodily glory, could in an instant turn *Saul*, the blaspheming, bloody persecutor, into *Paul*, the praying, gentle Apostle ;—if a sudden sight of Christ's hands, could in a moment root up from Thomas's heart, that detestable resolution, *I will not believe, and produce that*

that deep confession of faith, *My Lord and my God!* what cannot the display of Christ's spiritual glory, operate in a believing soul, to which he manifests himself according to that power, whereby he is able to subdue all things to himself?—Again: if Christ's body could in an instant, become so glorious on the mount, that his very garments partook of the sudden irradiation, became not only free from every spot, but also white as the light,—shining exceeding white as snow; so as no fuller on the earth can white them;—and if our bodies shall be changed; if this corruptible shall put on incorruption, and this mortal shall put on immortality in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump; why may not our believing souls, when they fully submit to God's terms, be fully changed—fully turned from the power of Satan unto God? When the Holy Ghost says, Now is the day of salvation, does he exclude salvation from heart-iniquity?—If Christ now deserves fully the name of Jesus, because he [fully saves] his [believing] people from their sins; and if now the gospel trumpet sounds; and sinners arise from the dead, why should we not upon the performance of the condition be changed in a moment from indwelling sin to indwelling holiness? Why should we not pass in the twinkling of an eye, or in a short time, from indwelling death to indwelling life?

This is not all: if you deny the possibility of a quick destruction of indwelling sin, you send to hell, or to some unscriptural purgatory, not only the dying thief, but also all those martyrs who suddenly embraced the christian faith, and were instantly put to death by bloody persecutors, for confessing the faith which they had just embraced. And if you allow, that God may cut his work short in righteousness in such a case, why not in other cases?—Why not especially when a believer confesses his indwelling sin, ardently prays that Christ would,

would, and sincerely believes that Christ can now cleanse from all unrighteousness.

No body is so apt to laugh at the *instantaneous* destruction of sin as the Calvinists, and yet [such is the inconsistency which characterizes some men!] their doctrine of purgatory is built upon it. For, if you credit them, all dying believers have a nature which is *still morally corrupted*, and a heart which is *yet desperately wicked*. These believers, still full of indwelling sin, instantaneously breathe out their least, and [without any peculiar act of faith, without any peculiar out-pouring of the sanctifying spirit] corruption is instantaneously gone. The indwelling *man of sin* has passed through the Geneva purgatory, he is entirely consumed, and, behold! the souls which would not hear of the instantaneous act of sanctifying faith, which receives the *indwelling Spirit of holiness*—the souls, which pleaded hard for the continuance of indwelling sin, are now completely sinless; and in the twinkling of an eye they appear in the third heaven among the spirits of just christians made perfect in love! Such is the doctrine of our opponents: and yet, they think it incredible that God should do for us while we pray in faith, what they suppose death will do for them, when they lie in his cold arms, perhaps delirious or senseless!

On the other hand, to deny that imperfect believers may, and do gradually grow in grace, and of course that the remains of their sins may, and do gradually decay, is as absurd as to deny that God waters the earth by daily dews, as well as by thunder-showers;—it is as ridiculous, as to assert that nobody is carried off by lingering disorders, but that all men die suddenly, or a few hours after they are taken ill.

I use these comparisons about death to throw some light upon the question which I solve, and not to insinuate that the decay and destruction of sin run parallel to the decay and dissolution of the body;

body, and that, of course, sin must end with our bodily life. Were I to admit this unscriptural tenet, I should build again what I have all along endeavoured to destroy, and [as I love consistency] I should promise eternal salvation to all unbelievers; for unbelievers, I presume, will die, i. e. will go into the Geneva-purgatory, as well as believers. Nor do I see why death should not be able to destroy the *van* and the *main body* of sin's forces, if it can so readily cut the *rear* [the remains of sin] in pieces.

From the preceding observations it appears, that believers generally go to christian perfection, as the disciples went to the other side of the sea of Galilee. They toiled some time very hard, and with little success. But after they had rowed about twenty-five, or thirty furlongs, they saw Jesus walking on the sea. He said to them, *It is I, be not afraid;* then they willingly received him into the ship, and immediately the ship was at the land whither they went. Just so we toil till our faith discovers Christ in the promise, and welcomes him into our hearts; and such is the effect of his presence, that immediately we arrive at the land of perfection.—Or [to use another illustration] God says to believers, Go to the Canaan of perfect love. Arise: why do ye tarry? Wash away the remains of sin, calling, i. e. believing on the name of the Lord. And if they submit to the obedience of faith, he deals with them as he did with the evangelist Philip, to whom he had said, *Arise, and go towards the South.* For when they arise and run, as Philip did, the Spirit of the Lord takes them, as he did the evangelist; and they are found in the new Jerusalem, as Philip was found at Axatus. They dwell in God [or in perfect love] and God [or perfect love] dwells in them.

Hence it follows, that the most evangelical method of following after the perfection to which we are immediately called, is that of seeking it now, by endeavouring *fally* to lay hold on the promise of that

that perfection through faith, just as if our repeated acts of obedience could never help us forward. But in the mean time we should do the work of faith, and repeat our internal and external acts of obedience with as much earnestness, and faithfulness, according to our present power, as if we were sure to enter into rest merely by a diligent use of our talents, and a faithful exertion of the powers which divine grace has bestowed upon us. If we do not attend to the first of these directions, we shall seek to be sanctified by works like the Pharisees; and if we disregard the second we shall slide into solifidian sloth with the Antinomians.

This double direction is founded upon the connexion of the two gospel-axioms. If the second axiom [which implies the doctrine of free-will] were false, I would only say: "Be still, or rather do nothing: free-grace alone will do all in you and for you." But as this axiom is as true as the first, I must add, "*Strive in humble subordination to free-grace: for Christ faith, To him that hath initiating grace to purpose, more grace shall be given, and he shall have abundance:*" his faithful and equitable benefactor will give him the reward of perfecting grace.

(5) Beware therefore of unscriptural refinements. Set out for the Canaan of perfect love with a firm resolution to labour for the rest which remains on earth for the people of God. Some good, mistaken men, wise above what is written, and fond of striking out paths, which were unknown to the Apostles,—new paths marked out by voluntary humility, and leading to Antinomianism;—some people of that stamp, I say, have made it their business, from the days of heated Augustin, to decry making resolutions. They represent this practice as a branch of what they are pleased to call *legality*. They insinuate that it is utterly inconsistent with the knowledge of our inconstancy and weakness: in a word, they frighten us from the first step to christian perfection:—from an humble, evangelical determination

tion to run, till we reach the prize, or, if you please to go down till we come to the lowest place. It may not be amiss to point out the ground of their mistake. Once they broke the balance of the gospel-axioms by leaning too much towards *free-will*, and by laying their *first* and *principal* stress upon *free-grace*. God, to bring them to the evangelical mean, refused his blessing to their *unevangelical* willing and running: hence it is, that their self-righteous resolutions started aside like a broken bow. When they found out their mistake, instead of coming back to the line of moderation, they fled to the other extreme. Casting all their weights into the scale of *free-grace*, they absurdly formed a resolution never to form a resolution: and, determining not to throw one determination into the scale of *free-will*, they began to draw all the believers they met with, into the ditch of a slothful quietism and Laodicean stillness.

You will never steadily go on to perfection, unless you get over this mistake. Let the imperfectionists laugh at you for making humble resolutions; but go on *stedfastly purposing to lead a new life*, as says our church; and in order to this, *stedfastly purpose to get a new heart* in the full sense of the word: for so long as your heart will continue partly *unrenewed*, your life will be partly *unholy*. And therefore, St. James justly observes, that, *if any man offend not in word, he is a perfect man, he loves God with all his heart, his heart is fully renewed*; it being impossible that an heart still-tainted in part with vanity and guile, should always dictate the words of sincerity and love. Your good resolutions need not fail: nor will they fail, if, under a due sense of the fickleness and helplessness of your unassisted free-will, you properly depend upon God's faithfulness and assistance. However, should they fail, as they probably will do more than once, be not discouraged, but *repent, search out the cause, and in the strength of free-grace, let your assisted*

assisted free-will, renew your evangelical purpose, till the Lord seals it with his mighty *flat*, and says, *Let it be done for thee according to thy resolving faith.* It is much better to be laughed at as “poor creatures who know nothing of themselves,” than to be deluded as foolish virgins, who fondly imagine that their vessels are full of imputed oil. Take therefore the sword of the Spirit, and boldly cut this dangerous snare in pieces. Conscious of your impotence, and yet laying out your talent of free-will, say with the prodigal son, *I will arise and go to my Father*:—Say with David, *I will love thee, O Lord my God*:—*I will behold thy face in righteousness*:—*I am purposed that my mouth shall not transgress*;—*I will keep it as it were with a bridle*:—*I have said, that I would keep thy word*:—*The proud [and they who are humble in an unscriptural way] have had me exceedingly in derision, but I will keep thy precepts with my whole heart*.—*I have sworn, and I will perform it, that I will keep thy righteous judgments*—Say with St. Paul, *I am determined not to know any thing save Jesus, and him crucified*; and with Jacob, *I will not let thee go, unless thou bless me*; and, to sum up all good resolutions in one, if you are a member of the church of England, say, “I have engaged to renounce all the vanities of this wicked world, all the sinful lusts of the flesh, and all the works of the devil: to believe all the articles of the christian faith; and to keep God’s commandments all the days of my life:” that is, I have most solemnly resolved to be a perfect christian. And this resolution I have publicly sealed by receiving the two sacraments upon it:—*Baptism*, after my parents and sponsors had laid me under this blessed vow; and *the Lord’s supper*, after I had personally ratified, in the Bishop’s presence, what they had done. Nor do I only think, that I am bound to keep this vow; but “by God’s grace, so I will; and I heartily thank our heavenly Father, that he has called me to this state of salvation [and christian perfection;] and I pray

unto him, to give me his grace, that I may [not only attain it, but also] continue in the same unto my life's end." Church Catech.

" Much diligence [says Kempis] is necessary to him that will profit much. If he who firmly purposeth, often faileth, what shall he do, who seldom or feebly purposeth any thing?" But [I say it again and again] do not lean upon your *free-will*, and good *purposes*, so as to encroach upon the glorious pre-eminence of *free-grace*. Let the first gospel-axiom stand invariably in its honourable place. Lay your *principal* stress upon divine mercy, and say with the good man whom I have just quoted, " Help me O Lord God, in thy holy service, and grant that I may now this day begin perfectly."

In following this method, ye will do the two gospel-axioms justice: ye will so depend upon God's *free-grace*, as not to fall into *pharisaic* running; and ye will so exert your own *free-will*, as not to slide into *Antinomian* sloth. Your course lies exactly between these rocks. To pass these perilous straits your resolving heart must acquire an heavenly polarity. Through the spiritually-magnetic touch of Christ the corner stone, your soul must learn to point towards *faith* and *works*, [or if you please, towards a due submission to *free-grace*, and a due exertion of *free-will*] as the opposite ends of the needle of a compass points towards the *North* and the *South*.

(6) From this direction flows the following advice. Resolve to be perfect in *yourselfs*, but not of *yourselfs*. The *Antinomians* boast that they are perfect only in their heavenly representative. Christ was filled with perfect humility and love: they are perfect in his person: they need not a perfection of humble love in themselves. To avoid their error, be perfect in *yourselfs*, and not in another: let your perfection of humility and love be inherent; let it dwell in you. Let it fill your own heart and influence your own life: so shall you

avoid the delusion of the virgins, who give you to understand, that the oil of their perfection is all contained in the sacred vessel which formerly hung on the cross, and therefore their salvation is finished, they have oil enough in that rich vessel; manna enough and to spare in that golden pot. Christ's heart was perfect, and therefore theirs may safely remain imperfect, yea, full of indwelling sin, till death, the messenger of the bridegroom come to cleanse them, and fill them with perfect love at the midnight cry! Delusive hope! Can any thing be more absurd than for a sapless, dry branch to fancy that it has sap and moisture enough in the vine which it cumbers? Or for an impenitent adulterer to boast, that *in the Lord he has chastity and righteousness?* Where did Christ ever say, *have salt in another?* Does he not say, *take heed that ye be not deceived?* — *Have salt in yourselves,* Mat. ix. 50? Does he not impute the destruction of stony ground hearers to their *not having root in themselves,* Mat. xiii. 21? If it was the patient man's comfort, that *the root of the matter was found in him,* is it not deplorable to hear modern believers say without any explanatory clause, that *they have nothing but sin in themselves?* But is it enough to have *the root in ourselves?* Must we not also have *the fruit* — yea, be filled with the fruits of righteousness? Phil. i. 11. Is it not St. Peter's doctrine, where he says, *if these things be in you, and abound, ye shall neither be barren, nor unfruitful in the knowledge of Christ?* 2 Pet. i. 8. And is it not that of David, where he prays, *create in me a clean heart, &c?* Away then with all antinomian refinements: and if, with St. Paul, you will have salvation and rejoicing in yourselves, and not in another; make sure of holiness and perfection in yourselves, and not in another.

But while you endeavour to avoid the snare of the Antinomians, do not run into that of the Pharisees, who will have their perfection of themselves; and therefore, by their own unevangelical efforts,

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self-concerted willings, and self-prescribed runnings, endeavour to raise sparks of their own kindling, and to warm themselves by their own painted fires, and fruitless agitations. Feel your impotence. Own that no man has quickened [and perfected] his own soul. Be contented to invite, receive, and welcome the light of life: but never attempt to reform or to engross it. It is your duty to wait for the morning-light, and to rejoice when it visits you; but if you grow so self-conceited as to say, "I will create a sun; Let there be light: or if, when the light visits your eyes, you say, "I will bear a stock of light, I will so fill my eyes with light to-day, that to-morrow I shall almost be able to do my work without the sun, or at least without a constant dependence upon its beams;" would ye not betray a species of self-deifying idolatry, and satanical pride? If our Lord himself [as Son of man] would not have one grain of human good of himself] but God; who can wonder enough at those proud christians, who claim self-originated goodness; boasting of what they have received, as if they had not received it; or using what they have received without an humble sense of their constant dependance upon their heavenly Benefactor? To avoid this horrid delusion of the pharisees, learn to see, to feel, and to acknowledge, that of the Father, through the Son, and by the Holy Ghost, are all your Urim and Thummim, your lights and perfections; and while the Lord says, From me is thy fruit found, Hos. xiv. 8. bow at his footstool, and gratefully reply, Of thy fulness have all we received, and grace for grace, John i. 16. For thou art the Father of lights, from whom cometh every good and perfect gift, Jam. i. 17.—Of thee, and through thee, and to thee are all things: to thee [therefore] be the glory for ever. Amen. Rom. xi. 36.

(7) You will have this humble and thankful disposition, if you let your repentance cast deeper roots. For if christian perfection implies a forsaking

ing all inward, as well as outward sin : and if true repentance is a grace “ whereby we forsake sin, it follows, that, to attain christian perfection, we must so follow our Lord’s evangelical precept, *Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand,* as to leave no sin—no bosom sin—no heart-sin—no indwelling sin unrepented of, and of consequence, unsorsaken. He, whose heart is still full of indwelling sin, has no more truly repented of indwelling sin, than the man, whose mouth is still defiled with filthy talking and jesting, has truly repented of his ribaldry. The deeper our sorrow for, and detestation of indwelling sin is, the more penitently do we confess the plague of our heart ; and when we properly confess it, we inherit the blessing promised in these words, *If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*

To promote this deep repentance, consider how many spiritual evils still haunt your breast. Look into the inward chamber of imagery, where assuming self-love, surrounded by a multitude of vain thoughts, foolish desires, and wild imaginations, keeps her court. Grieve that your heart, which should be all flesh, is yet partly stone ; that your soul, which should be only a temple for the Holy Ghost, is yet so frequently turned into a den of thieves, an hole for the cockatrice, a nest for a brood of spiritual vipers—for the remains of envy, jealousy, fretfulness, anger, pride, impatience, peevishness, formality, sloth, prejudice, bigotry, carnal confidence, evil shame, self-righteousness, tormenting fears, uncharitable suspicions, idolatrous love, and I know not how many of the evils, which form the retinue of hypocrisy and unbelief. Thro’ grace detect these evils by a close attention to what passes in your own heart at all times, but especially in an hour of temptation. By frequent and deep confession, drag out all these abominations. These sins, which would not have Christ to reign alone over

over you, bring before him : place them in the light of his countenance ; and [if you do it in faith] that light, and the warmth of his love, will kill them, as the light and heat of the sun kill the worms, which the plow turns up to the open air in a dry summer's day.

Nor plead that you can do nothing : for, by the help of Christ, who is always ready to assist the helpless, ye can solemnly say upon your knees, what ye have probably said in an airy manner to your professing friends. If ye ever acknowledged to them, that your heart is deceitful, prone to leave undone what ye ought to do, and ready to do what ye ought to leave undone ; ye can undoubtedly make the same confession to God. Complain to him who can help you, as ye have done to those who cannot. Lament, as you are able, the darkness of your mind, the stiffness of your will, the dulness or exorbitancy of your affections, and importunely intreat the God of all grace to renew a right spirit within you. If ye sorrow after this godly sort, what carefulness will be wrought in you ! what indignation ! what fear ! what vehement desire ! what zeal ! yea, what revenge ! Ye will then sing in faith, what the imperfectionists sing in unbelief :

O how I hate those lusts of mine :
That crucified my God :
Those sins that piercéd and nailéd his flesh
Fast to the fatal wood.

Yes, my Redeemer, they shall die,
My heart hath so decreed ;
Nor will I spare those guilty things,
That made my Saviour bleed.

Whilst with a melting, broken heart,
My murderer'd Lord I view,
I'll raise revenge against my fins,
And slay the murderers too.

(8) Closely connected with this deep repentance is the practice of a judicious, universal self-denial. *If thou wilt be perfect, says our Lord, deny thyself: take up thy cross daily; and follow me.* He that loveth father, or mother, [much more he that loveth pride, pleasure or money] more than me, is not worthy of me: nay, *Whosoever will save his life, shall lose it; and whosoever will lose it for my sake, shall find it.* Many desire to live and reign with Christ, but few chuse to suffer and die with him. However, as the way of the cross leads to heaven, it undoubtedly leads to christian perfection. To avoid the cross therefore; or to decline drinking the cup of vinegar and gall, which God permits your friends or foes to mix for you, is to throw away the aloes, which divine wisdom puts to the breasts of the mother of harlots, to wean you from her and her witchcrafts: it is to refuse a medicine, which is kindly prepared to restore your health and appetite: in a word, it is to renounce the physician, who heals all our infirmities, when we take his bitter draughts, submit to have our impostumes opened by his sharp lancet, and yield to have our proud-flesh wasted away by his painful caustics. Our Lord was made a perfect Saviour through sufferings, and we may be made perfect christians in the same manner. We may be called to suffer, till all that which we have brought out of spiritual Egypt is consumed in an howling wilderness, in a dismal Gethsemene, or on a shameful Calvary. Should this lot be reserved for us, let us not imitate our Lord's imperfect disciples, who forsook him and fled; but let us stand the fiery trial, till all our fetters are melted, and our dross is purged away. Fire is of a purgative nature: it separates the dross from the gold; and the fiercer it is, the more quick-and powerful is its operation. *He that is left in Zion, and he that remaineth in Jerusalem, shall be called holy, &c. when the Lord shall have washed away the filth of the daughters of Zion, and shall have purged the*

the blood of Jerusalem by the spirit of judgment and by the spirit of burning, Isa. iv. 4.—I will bring the third part through the fire, saith the Lord, and will refine them as silver is refined, and will try them as gold is tried: they shall call on my name, and I will hear them: I will say, it is my people; and they shall say, The Lord is my God, Zach. xiii. 9. Therefore, if the Lord should suffer the best men in his camp, or strongest men in Satan's army, to cast you into a furnace of fiery temptations, come not out of it till you are called. Let patience have its perfect work: meekly keep your trying station, till your heart is disengaged from all that is earthly, and till the sense of God's preserving power kindles in you such a faith in his omnipotent love, as few experimentally know, but they who have seen themselves like the mysterious bush in Horeb, burning and yet unconsumed; or they who can say with St. Paul, *We are killed all the day long; and behold we live!*

“ Temptations [says Kempis] are often very profitable to men, though they be troublesome and grievous: for in them a man is humbled, purified, and instructed. All the saints have passed through, and profited by many tribulations: and they that could not bear temptations, became reprobates, and fell away.”—“ My son [adds the author of Ecclesiasticus, chap. ii. 1.] “ if thou come to serve the Lord” [in the perfect beauty of holiness] “ prepare thy soul for temptation. Set thy heart aright; constantly endure; and make not haste in the time of trouble. Whatever is brought upon thee take cheerfully; and be patient when thou art changed to a low estate: for gold is tried and purified in the fire, and acceptable men in the furnace of adversity.”—And therefore, says St. James, *Blessed is the man that endureth temptation; for, when he is tried [if he stands the fiery trial] he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord has promised to them that love [with the love which endureth (temptation and) all things, i. e. with perfect love,] Jam. i. 12.* Patiently endure

endure then, when God for a season [if need be] will suffer you to be in heaviness through manifold temptations. By this means, the trial of your faith, being much more precious than that of gold which perisheth, though it be tried in the fire, will be found unto praise, and honour, and glory, at the appearing of Jesus Christ, 1 Pet. i. 7.

(9) Deep repentance is good, gospel self-denial is excellent, and a degree of patient resignation in trials is of unspeakable use to attain the perfection of love: but as *faith immediately works by love*, it is of far more immediate use to purify the soul. Hence it is, that Christ, the prophets, and the apostles, so strongly insist upon *faith*; assuring us that if we will not believe we shall not be established;—that if we will believe we shall see the glory of God,—we shall be saved,—and the rivers of living water shall flow from our inmost souls;—that our hearts are purified by *faith*;—and that we are saved by grace through *faith*:—they tell us, that Christ gave himself for the church, that he might sanctify and cleanse it—by the word, that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish. Now, if believers are to be cleansed and made without blemish by the word [which testifies of the all-atoning blood, and the love of the Spirit] it is evident that they are to be sanctified by *faith*; for *faith*, or believing, has as necessary a reference to the word as eating has to food.—For the same reason the apostle observes, that they who believe enter into rest;—that a promise being given us to enter in, we should take care not to fall short of it through unbelief;—that we ought to take warning by the Israelites, who could not enter into the land of promise through unbelief;—that we are filled with all joy and peace in believing;—and that Christ is able to save to the uttermost them who come unto God through him: now coming, in the scripture language is another expression for believing: he that cometh to God [says the apostle] must believe.

believe. Hence it appears, that faith is peculiarly necessary to those who will be saved to the uttermost,—especially a firm faith in the capital promise of the gospel of Christ, the promise of the Spirit of holiness from the Father, through the Son. For, How shall they call on him, in whom they have not believed? Or, How can they earnestly plead the truth, and steadily wait for the performance of a promise, in which they have no faith?—This doctrine of faith is supported by Peter's words: *God, who knoweth the hearts [of penitent believers] bare them witness, giving them the Holy Ghost—and purifying their hearts by faith,* Acts xv. 8, 9. For the same spirit of faith, which initially purifies our hearts when we cordially believe the pardoning love of God, completely cleanses them when we fully believe his sanctifying love.

(10) This direction about faith being of the utmost importance, I shall confirm and explain it by an extract from Mr. Wesley's sermon, which points out “*The scripture-way of salvation.*” Though it be allowed [says this judicious divine] that both this repentance and its fruits are necessary to full salvation, yet they are not necessary either in the same sense with faith, or in the same degree; not in the same degree; for these fruits are only necessary conditionally, if there be time and opportunity for them, otherwise a man may be sanctified without them. But he cannot be sanctified without faith. Likewise let a man have ever so much of this repentance, or ever so many good works, yet all this does not at all avail; he is not sanctified till he believes. But the moment he believes, with or without those fruits, yea, with more or less of this repentance, he is sanctified.—Not in the same sense; for this repentance and these fruits are only remotely necessary, necessary in order to the continuance of his faith, as well as the increase of it: whereas faith is immediately and directly necessary to sanctification. It remains that faith is the only condition,

condition, which is immediately and proximately necessary to sanctification."

" But what is that faith whereby we are sanctified, saved from sin, and perfected in love? It is a divine evidence or conviction, (1) That God hath promised it in the holy scripture. Till we are thoroughly satisfied of this, there is no moving one step further. And one would imagine, there needed not one word more, to satisfy a reasonable man of this, than the ancient promise, *Then will I circumcise thy heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul.* How clearly does this express the being perfected in love? How strongly imply the being saved from all sin? For as long as love takes up the whole heart, what room is there for sin therein?—(2) It is a divine evidence and conviction, that what God has promised he is able to perform. Admitting therefore that with men it is impossible, to bring a clean thing out of an unclean, to purify the heart from all sin, and to fill it with all holiness; yet this creates no difficulty in the case, seeing with God all things are possible.—(3) It is an evidence and conviction, that he is able and willing to do it now. And why not? Is not a moment to him, the same as a thousand years? He cannot want more time to accomplish whatever is his will. We may therefore boldly at any point of time say, *Now is the day of salvation. Behold! All things are now ready! Come to the marriage!*—(4) To this confidence, that God is both able and willing to sanctify us now, there needs to be added one thing more, a divine evidence and conviction, that he doth it. In that hour it is done. God says to the inmost soul, *According to thy faith, be it unto thee!* Then the soul is pure from every spot of sin; it is clean from all unrighteousness."

Those who have low ideas of faith, will probably be surprised to see how much Mr. Wesley ascribes to that christian grace, and to enquire why

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he so nearly connects our believing that God cleanses us from all sin, with God's actual cleansing of us from all sin. But their wonder will cease, if they consider the definition which this divine gives of faith in the same sermon. "Faith, in general [says he] is defined by the apostle, an *evidence*, a divine *evidence* and *conviction* [the word used by the apostle means both] of *things not seen*: not visible, not perceivable either by sight, or by any other of the external senses. It implies both a supernatural *evidence* of God and of the things of God, a kind of *spiritual light* exhibited to the soul, and a *supernatural sight* or perception thereof: accordingly the scripture speaks of God's giving sometimes light, sometimes a power of discerning it. So St. Paul. "God who commanded light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God, in the face of Jesus Christ." And elsewhere the same apostle speaks of "the eyes of our understanding being opened." By this two-fold operation of the Holy Spirit, having the eyes of our souls both opened and enlightened, we see the things which the natural eye hath not seen, neither the ear heard. We have a prospect of the invisible things of God: we see the *spiritual world*, which is all round about us, and yet no more discerned by our natural faculties, than if it had no being; and we see the *eternal world*, piercing through the veil which hangs between time and eternity. Clouds and darkness then rest upon it no more, but we already see the glory which shall be revealed."

From this striking definition of faith it is evident, that the doctrine of this Address exactly coincides with Mr. Wesley's sermon; with this verbal difference only, that what he calls *faith* implying a two-fold operation of the spirit productive of *spiritual light*, and *supernatural light*! I have called *faith apprehending a sanctifying baptism* [or *out-pouring*] of the spirit. His mode of expression sa-

vours more of the rational divine, who logically divides the truth, in order to render its several parts conspicuous: and I keep closer to the words of the scriptures, which, I hope, will frighten no candid protestant. I make this remark for the sake of those who fancy, that, when a doctrine is clothed with expressions which are not quite familiar to them, it is a new doctrine; although these expressions should be as scriptural as those of a *baptism*, or *out-pouring of the Spirit*, which are used by some of the Prophets, by John the Baptist, by the four Evangelists, and by Christ himself.

I have already pointed out the close connexion there is, between an act of *faith* which fully apprehends the sanctifying promise of the Father, and the power of the Spirit of Christ, which makes an end of moral corruption by forcing the lingering man of sin *instantaneously* to breathe out his last. Mr. *Wesley* in the above-quoted sermon touches upon this delicate subject in so clear and concise a manner, that while his discourse is before me, for the sake of those who have it not at hand, I shall transcribe the whole passage, and by this means put the seal of that eminent divine to what I have advanced, in the preceding pages, about sanctifying faith and the quick destruction of sin.

“ Does God work this great work in the soul *gradually* or *instantaneously*? Perhaps it may be gradually wrought in some: I mean in this sense: they do not advert to the particular moment, wherein sin ceases to be. But it is infinitely desirable, were it the will of God, that it should be done instantaneously; that the Lord should destroy sin by the breath of his mouth, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye. And so he generally does, a plain fact, of which there is evidence enough to satisfy any unprejudiced person. Thou therefore look for it every moment. Look for it in the way above described; in all those good works,

works, whereunto thou art created anew in Christ Jesus. There is then no danger: you can be no worse, if you are no better for that expectation. For were you to be disappointed of your hope, still you lose nothing. But you shall not be disappointed of your hope: it will come, and will not tarry. Look for it then every day, every hour, every moment. Why not this hour, this moment? Certainly you may look for it now, if you believe it is by faith. And by this token you may surely know whether you seek it by faith or by works. If by works, you want something to be done first: before you are sanctified. You think, "I must first be or do thus or thus." Then you are seeking it by works unto this day. If you seek it by faith, expect it as you are: and if as you are, then expect it now. It is of importance to observe that there is an inseparable connexion between these three points, expect it by faith, expect it as you are, and expect it now! To deny one of them is to deny them all: to allow one is to allow them all. Do you believe, we are sanctified by faith? Be true to your principle; and look for this blessing just as you are, neither better, nor worse; as a poor sinner, that has still nothing to pay, nothing to plead, but *Christ died*. And if you look for it as you are, then expect it now. Stay for nothing: why should you? Christ is ready; and he is all you want. He is waiting for you: he is at the door! Let your inmost soul cry out,

" Come in, come in, thou heavenly guest!
Nor hence again remove:
But sup with me, and let the feast
Be everlasting love."

(11) *Social prayer* is closely connected with *faith*, in the capital promise of the sanctifying Spirit: and therefore I earnestly recommend that mean of grace [where it can be had] as being eminently conducive

give to the attaining of christian perfection. When many believing hearts are lifted up, and wrestle with God in prayer together, you may compare them to many diligent hands, which work a large machine. At such times, particularly, the fountains of the great deep are broken up, the windows of heaven are opened, and *rivers of living water* flow from the heart of obedient believers.

In Christ when brethren join,
And follow after peace,
The fellowship divine
He promises to bless,
His chiehest graces to bestow
Where two or three are met below.

Where unity takes place,
The joys of heaven we prove ;
This is the gospel grace,
The unction from above,
The Spirit on all believers shed,
Descending swift from Christ their head.

Accordingly we read, that, when God powerfully opened the kingdom of the Holy Ghost on the day of pentecost, the disciples " were all with one accord in one place." And when he confirmed that kingdom, they were lifting up their voice to God with one accord. See Acts ii. 1. and iv. 24. Thus also the believers at Samaria were filled with the Holy Ghost, the Sanctifier, while Peter and John prayed with them, and laid hands upon them.

(12) But perhaps thou art alone. As a solitary bird which sitteth on the house-top, thou lookest for a companion who may go with thee through the deepest travail of the regeneration. But alas ! thou lookest in vain : all the professors about thee seem satisfied with their former experiences, and with self-imputed or self-conceited perfection.
When

When thou givest them a hint of thy want of power from on high, and of thy hunger and thirst after a fulness of righteousness, they do not sympathize with thee. And indeed how can they? They are full already, they reign without thee, they have need of nothing. They do not sensibly want that "God would grant them, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might in the inner man, that Christ may dwell in their hearts by faith, that they, being rooted and grounded in love, may comprehend with all saints [perfected in love] what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height, and to know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge, that they might be filled with all the fulness of God, Eph. iii. 16," &c. They look upon thee as a whimsical person, full of singular notions, and they rather damp, than enliven thy hopes. Thy circumstances are sad; but do not give place to despair, no not for a moment. In the name of Christ, who could not get even Peter, James, and John, to watch with him one hour; and who was obliged to go through his agony alone;—in his name, I say, "cast not away thy confidence which has great recompence of reward." Under all thy discouragements, remember that, after all, divine grace is not confined to numbers, any more than to a few. When all outward helps fail thee, make the more of Christ, on whom sufficient help is laid for thee.—Christ, who says, "I will go with thee through fire and water: the former shall not burn thee, nor the latter drown thee." Jacob was alone when he wrestled with the angel, yet he prevailed: and if the servant is not above his master, wonder not, that it should be said of thee, as of thy Lord, when he went through his greatest temptations, *Of the people there was none with him.*

Should thy conflicts be with confused noise, with burning, and jewel of fire; Should thy Jerusalem be rebuilt in troublous times: Should the Lord shake, not

the earth only, but also heaven ; should deep call unto deep at the noise of his water-spouts ; should all his waves and billows go over thee ; should thy patience be tried to the uttermost ; remember how in years past thou hast tried the patience of God, nor be discouraged : an extremity, and a storm, are often God's opportunity. A blast of temptation, and a shaking of all thy foundations, may introduce the fulness of God to thy soul, and answer the end of the rushing wind, and of the shaking, which formerly accompanied the first great manifestations of the Spirit. The Jews still expect the coming of the Messiah in the flesh ; and they particularly expect it in a storm. When lightnings flash, when thunders roar, when a strong wind shakes their houses, and the tempestuous sky seems to rush down in thunder-showers : then some of them particularly open their doors and windows to entertain their wished-for deliverer. Do spiritually, what they do carnally. Constantly wait for full power from on high ; but especially when a storm of affliction, temptation, or distress overtakes thee ; or when thy convictions and desires raise thee above thyself, as the waters of the flood raised Noah's ark above the earth ; then be particularly careful to throw the door of *faith*, and the window of *hope* as wide open as thou canst ; and spreading the arms of thy imperfect *love*, say with all the ardor and resignation, which thou art master of,

My heart-strings groan with deep complaint,
My flesh lies panting, Lord, for thee ;
And every limb, and every joint,
Stretches for perfect purity.

But if the Lord is pleased to come softly to thy help ; if he makes an end of thy corruptions by helping thee gently to sink to unknown depths of meekness ; if he drowns the indwelling man of sin by baptizing—by plunging him into an abyss of humility ;

lity ; do not find fault with the simplicity of his method, the plainness of his appearing, and the commonness of his prescription. Nature, like Naaman, is full of prejudices. She expects that Christ will come to make her clean with as much ado, pomp, and bustle, as the Syrian general looked for when he was wroth and said, *Behold I thought, he will surely come out to me—and stand—and call on his God—and strike his hand over the place—and recover the leper.* Christ frequently goes a much plainer way to work : and by this means he disconcerts all our pre-conceived notions and schemes of deliverance. “ *Learn of me to be meek and lowly in heart, and thou shalt find rest to thy soul,* —the sweet rest of christian perfection, of perfect humility, resignation and meekness. Lie at my feet, as she did who loved much, and was meekly taken up with the good part, and the one thing needful :” But thou frettest : thou despisest this robe of perfection : it is too plain for thee : thou slightest the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which, in the sight of God, is of great price : nothing will serve thy turn but a tawdry coat of many colours, which may please thy proud self-will, and draw the attention of others, by its glorious and flaming appearance ; and it must be brought to thee with lightnings, thundrings, and voices. If this is thy disposition, wonder not at the divine wisdom, which thinks fit to disappoint the lofty prejudices ; and let me address thee as Naaman’s servants addressed him : *My brother, if the prophet had bid thee do some great thing, wouldst thou not have done it ? how much rather then, when he says to thee, “ I am the meek and lowly Lamb of God, wash in the stream of my blood —plunge in the Jordan of my humility, and be clean ? ”* Instead therefore of going away from a plain Jesus in a rage, welcome him in his lowest appearance, and be persuaded that he can as easily make an end of thy sin by gently coming in a still, small voice, as by rushing in upon thee in a storm, a fire,

fire, or an earthquake. The Jews rejected their Saviour, not so much because they did not earnestly desire his coming, as because he did not come in the manner in which they expected him. It is probable that some of this judaism cleaves to thee. If thou wilt absolutely come to mount Sion in a triumphal chariot, or make thine entrance into the new Jerusalem upon a prancing horse, thou art likely never to come there. Leave then all thy lordly misconceptions behind; and humbly follow thy king, who makes his entry into the typical Jerusalem, *meek and lowly, riding upon an ass, yea, upon a colt, the foal of an ass.* I say it again therefore, whilst thy faith and hope strongly insist on the blessing, let thy resignation and patience leave to God's infinite goodness and wisdom the peculiar manner of bestowing it. When he says, *Surely I come quickly to make my abode with thee,* let thy faith close in with his word: ardently and yet meekly embrace his promise: it will instantly beget power; and with that power thou mayest instantly bring forth prayer, and possibly the prayer which opens heaven, humbly wrestles with God, inherits the blessing, and turns the well-known petition, *Amen, Even so, Come, Lord Jesus,* into the well-known praises, *He is come! He is come! Praise the Lord, O my soul, &c.*—Thus repent, believe, and obey; and he that cometh, will come with a fulness of pure, meek, humble love: *he will not tarry:* or if he taries, it will be to give to thy faith and desires more time to open, that thou mayest at his appearing, be able to take in more of his perfecting grace and sanctifying power: besides, thy expectation of his coming, is of a purifying nature, and gradually sanctifies thee. *He that has this hope in him, by this very hope purifies himself even as God is pure: for we are saved [into perfect love] by hope, as well as by faith.* The stalk bears the full corn in the ear, as well as the root.

Up

Up then, thou sincere expectant of God's kingdom, let thy humble, ardent free-will meet preventient, sanctifying free-grace in its weakest and darkest appearance, as the father of the faithful met the Lord, when he appeared to him in the plain of Mamre as a mere mortal. Abraham lifted up his eyes and looked, and lo three men stood by him : so does free-grace [if I may venture upon the allusion] invite itself to thy tent : nay, it is now with thee in its creating, redeeming, and sanctifying influences. And when he saw them, he ran to meet them from the tent door, and bowed himself towards the ground. Go and do likewise : if thou feest any beauty in the humbling grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, in the sanctifying love of God, and in the comfortable fellowship of the Holy Ghost, let thy free-will run to meet them, and bow itself toward the ground. O for a speedy going out of thy tent—thy sinful self ? O for a race of desire in the way of faith ! O for incessant prostrations ! O for a meek and deep bowing of thyself before thy divine deliverer !—And Abraham said, my Lord, if now I have found favour in thy sight, pass not away, I pray thee, from thy servant.—O for the humble pressing of a loving faith ! O for the faith which stopt the sun, when God avenged his people in the days of Joshua ! O for the importunate faith of the two disciples, who detained Christ, when he made as though he would have gone farther ! They constrained him saying, abide with us, for it is towards evening, and the day is far spent. And he went in to tarry with them.—He soon indeed vanished out of their bodily sight, because they were not called always to enjoy his bodily presence. Far from promising them that blessing, he had said, It is expedient for you that I go away : for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you : but if I depart, I will send him unto you—that he may abide with you for ever.—He dwelleth with you, and shall be in you. This promise is still yea, and amen in Christ ; only plead it according to the preceding

ceding directions, and as sure as our Lord is the true and faithful Witness, so sure will the God of Hope and love soon fill you with all joy and peace, that ye may abound in pure love, as well as in confirmed hope through the power of the Holy Ghost. Then shall you have an indisputable right to join the believers who sing at the Tabernacle, and at the Lock-Chapel,

Many are we now, and one,
We who Jesus have put on :
There is neither bond nor free,
Male nor female, Lord, in thee.
Love, like death, hath all destroy'd,
Rendered all distinctions void :
Names, and sects, and parties fall :
Thou, O Christ, art all in all.

In the mean time you may sing with the pious Countess of Huntingdon—the Rev. Mr. Madan—the Rev. Dr. Conyers—the Rev. Mr. Berridge—Richard Hill, Esq. and the imperfectionists who use their collections of hymns, ye may sing I say, with them all, the two following hymns, which they have agreed to borrow from the hymns of Messrs. Wesley, after making some insignificant alterations. I transcribe them from the collection used in Lady Huntingdon's chapels. Bristol edition, 1765, page 239, &c.

O for an heart to praise my God!
An heart from sin set free :
An heart that's sprinkled with the blood
So freely spilt for me.

An heart resign'd, submissive, meek,
My dear Redeemer's throne,
Where only Christ is heard to speak,
Where Jesus reigns alone.

An humble, lowly, contrite heart,
 Believing, true, and clean,
 Which neither life nor death can part
 From him that dwells within.

An heart in ev'ry thought renew'd,
 And fill'd with love divine;
 Perfect, and right, and pure, and good,
 A copy, Lord, of thine.

My heart, thou know'est, can never rest,
 Till thou create my peace:
 Till of mine Eden re-possest,
 From self and sin I cease.

Thy nature, gracious Lord, impart,
 Come quickly from above;
 Write thy new name upon my heart,
 Thy new, best name of love.

Here is undoubtedly an evangelical prayer for the love which restores the soul to a state of sinless rest, and evangelical perfection. Mean ye, my brethren, what the good people who dissent from us print and sing, and I ask no more. Nor can ye wait for an answer to the prayer contained in the preceding hymn, in a more scriptural manner, than by pleading the *promise of the Father* in such words as these :

Love divine, all loves excelling,
 Joy of heaven, to earth come down!
 Fix in us thine humble dwelling,
 All thy faithful mercies crown:
 Jesus, thou art all compassion,
 Pure, unbounded love thou art;
 Visit us with thy salvation,
 Enter every trembling heart!

Breathe!

Breathe ! O breathe thy loving spirit
 Into every troubled breast !
 Let us all in thee inherit,
 Let us find thy * promis'd rest.
 Take away the † power of sinning,
 Alpha and Omega be ;
 End of faith, as it's beginning,
 Set our hearts at liberty.

Come ! almighty to deliver,
 Let us all thy life receive !
 Suddenly return, and never,
 Never more thy temples leave !
 Thee we would be always blessing,
 Serve thee as thine hosts above ;
 Pray, and praise thee without ceasing,
 Glory in thy precious † love.

Finish then thy new creation,
 Pure, § unspotted may we be ;
 Let us see thy great salvation,
 Perfectly restor'd by thee ;
 Changed from glory into glory,
 Till in heaven we take our place ;
 Till we cast our crowns before thee,
 Lost in wonder, love, and praise.

Lift

* Mr. Wesley says, *second rest*, because an imperfect believer enjoys a first, inferior rest : if he did not, he would be no believer.

† Is not this expression too strong ? Would it not be better to soften it as Mr. Hill has done, by saying, "Take away the love of" [or the bent to] "sinning?" Can God take away from us our power of sinning, without taking away the power of free obedience ?

‡ Mr. Wesley says, *perfect love*, with St. John.

* Mr. Wesley says indeed, pure and sinless : but when Mr. Hill sings pure, unspotted, he does not spoil the sense. For every body knows, that the pure, unspotted Jesus, does not differ from the sinless, immaculate Lamb of God. This fine hymn [I think] is not in Mr. Madan's collection, but he has probably sung it more

Lift up your hands which hang down: our Aaron, our heavenly High priest, is near to hold them up. The spiritual Amalekites will not always prevail: our Samuel, our heavenly prophet, is ready to cut them and their king in pieces before the Lord. *The promise is unto you.* You are surely called to attain the perfection of your dispensation, altho' you seem still afar off. Christ, in whom that perfection centres;—Christ, from whom it flows, is very near, even at the door; *Behold, says he, [and this he spake to Laodicean loiterers]* I stand at the door and knock: if any man hear my voice and open, I will come in, and sup with him, upon the fruits of my grace, in their christian perfection; and he shall sup with me, upon the fruits of my glory, in their angelical and heavenly maturity.

Hear this encouraging gospel: “Ask, and you shall have: seek, and you shall find: knock, and it shall be opened unto you. For every one that asketh, receiveth: and he that seeketh, findeth: and to him that knocketh, it shall be opened.—If any of you [believers] lack wisdom,—indwelling wisdom,—[Christ, the wisdom and the power of God, dwelling in his heart by faith] let him ask of God, who giveth to all men, and upbraideth none; and it shall be given him. But let him ask [as a

more than once. However, it is adopted in the Shawbury-Collection, of which Mr. Hill is the publisher, in conjunction with Mr. De Courcy. Is it not surprising, that, in his devotional warmth, that gentleman should print, give out, and sing Mr. Wesley's strongest hymns for christian perfection; when, in his controversial heat, he writes so severely against this blessed state of heart? And may not I take my leave of him by an allusion to our Lord's words, Out of thy own mouth—thy own pen—thy own publications—thy own hymns—thy own prayers—thy own Bible—thy own reason—thy own conscience—and [what is most astonishing] thy own profession and baptismal vow, I will judge thy mistakes?—Nevertheless I desire the reader to impute them, as I do, not to any love for indwelling sin, but to the fatal error, which makes my pious opponent turn his back upon the genuine doctrines of grace and justice, and espouse the spurious doctrines of Calvinian grace and free-wrath.

believer] in faith, nothing wavering: for he that wavereth, is like a wave of the sea, driven with the wind and tossed: for let not that man think, that he shall receive the thing which he [thus] asketh. But whatsoever things ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them. For, all things [commanded and promised] are possible to him that believeth. He, who has commanded us to be perfect in love as our heavenly Father is perfect, and he who has promised speedily to avenge his elect, who cry to him night and day:—He will speedily avenge you of your grand adversary, indwelling sin. He will say to you: According to thy faith, be it done unto thee; for he is able to do far exceeding abundantly, above all that we can ask or think; and of his fulness we may all receive grace for grace: we may all witness the gracious fulfilment of all the promises, which he has graciously made, that by them we might be partakers of the divine nature, so far as it can be communicated to mortals in this world. You see that, with men, what you look for is impossible: but show yourselves believers; take God into the account, and you will soon experience, that with God all things are possible. Nor forget the omnipotent Advocate, whom you have with him. Behold! he lifts his once-pierced hands, and says, *Father, sanctify them through thy [loving] truth—that they may be perfected in one:* and shewing to you the fountain of atoning blood, and purifying water, whence flow the streams which cleanse and gladden the heart of believers, he says, Hitherto you have asked nothing in my name:—Whatsoever you shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you.—Ask then, that your joy may be full. If I try your faith by a little delay:—if I hide my face for a moment, it is only to gather you with everlasting kindness.—A woman, when she is in travail, hath sorrow, because her hour is come: but as soon as she is delivered of the child, she remembereth no more the anguish for joy.

joy. Now ye have sorrow: but I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you. In that day ye shall ask me no question, for you shall not have any bodily presence. But my *Urim and Thummim* will be with you; and the *Spirit of truth* will himself lead you into all [christian] truth."

O for a firm and lasting faith,
To credit all the Almighty faith,
To embrace the Promise of his Son,
And feel the Comforter our own.

In the mean time be not afraid to give glory to God by believing in hope, against hope. Stagger not at the Promise [of the Father and the Son] through unbelief: but trust the power and faithfulness of your Creator and Redeemer, till your Sanctifier has fixed his abode in your heart. Wait at mercy's door, as the lame beggar did at the beautiful gate of the temple. Peter fastening his eyes upon him, with John, said, Look on us: and he gave heed to them, expecting to receive something of them.—Do so too: give heed to the Father in the Son who says, Look unto me and be ye saved: Expect to receive the *one thing now needful* for you, a fulness of the sanctifying Spirit. And though your patience may be tried, it shall not be disappointed. The faith and power, which [at Peter's word] gave the poor cripple a perfect soundness in the presence of all the wondering Jews, will give you [at Christ's word] a perfect soundness of heart, in the presence of all your adversaries.

"Faith, mighty faith, the promise sees,
And looks to that alone,
Laughs at impossibilities,
And cries, It shall be done." — C. 2. * Faith

" Faith asks impossibilities :
 Impossibilities are given :
 And I, even I, from sin shall cease,
 Shall live on earth the life of heaven ?"

Faith always works by love ;—by love of desire at least ; making us ardently pray for what we believe to be eminently desirable. And if christian perfection appears so to you, you might perhaps express your earnest desire of it in some such words as these : " How long, Lord, shall my soul—thy spiritual temple, be a den of thieves, or an house of merchandise ? How long shall vain thoughts profane it, as the buyers and sellers profaned thy temple made with human hands ? How long shall evil tempers lodge within me. How long shall unbelief, formality, hypocrisy, envy, hankering after sensual pleasure, indifference to spiritual delights, and backwardness to painful or ignominious duty, harbour there ? How long shall these sheep and doves, yea, these goats and serpents defile my breast, which should be pure as the Holy of Holies ? How long shall they hinder me from being one of the worshippers whom thou seekest ;—one of those who worship thee in spirit and in truth ? O help me to take away the cages of unclean birds. Suddenly come to thy temple. Turn out all that offends the eye of thy purity ; and destroy all that keeps me out of the rest, which remains for thy christian people : so shall I keep a spiritual sabbath—a christian jubilee to the God of my life : so shall I witness my share in the oil of joy, with which thou anointest perfect christians above their fellow-believers. I stand in need of that oil, Lord : my lamp burns dim : sometimes it seems to be even gone out, as that of the foolish virgins : it is more like a smoking flax, than a burning and shining light. O ! quench it not : raise it to a flame. Thou knowest, that I do believe in thee. The trembling hand of my faith holds thee : pardoning

and though I have ten thousand times grieved thy pardoning love, thine everlasting arm is still under me, to redeem my life from destruction ; while thy right hand is over me, to crown me with mercies and loving kindness. But alas ! I am neither sufficiently thankful for thy present mercies, nor sufficiently athirst for thy future favours. Hence I feel an aching void in my soul ; being conscious that I have not attained the heights of grace described in thy word, and enjoyed by thy holiest servants. Their deep experiences, the diligence and ardor, with which they did thy will ; the patience and fortitude with which they endured the cross, reproach me, and convince me of my manifold wants. I want power from on high :—I want the penetrating, lasting unction of the Holy One :—I want to have my vessel [my capacious heart] full of the oil, which makes the countenance of wise virgins cheerful :—I want a lamp of heavenly illumination, and a fire of divine love, burning day and night in my breast, as the typical lamps did in the temple, and the sacred fire on the altar :—I want a full application of the blood which cleanses from all sin ; and a strong faith in thy sanctifying word :—a faith by which thou mayest dwell in my heart, as the unwavering hope of glory, and the fixed object of my love :—I want the internal Oracle—thy still, small voice, together with *Urim* and * *Thummim*,—the new name, which none knoweth, but he that receiveth it. In a word, Lord, I want a plenitude of thy Spirit, the full promise of the Father, and the rivers which flow from the inmost soul of the believers, who have gone on to the perfection of thy dispensation. I do believe that thou canst, and wilt thus baptize me with the Holy Ghost and with fire : help my unbelief : confirm and increase my faith, with regard to this important baptism. Lord, I have need to be thus baptized of thee, and I am straitened till this baptism

* Two Hebrew words, which mean Lights and Perfections.

is accomplished. By the baptisms of tears in the manger—of water in Jordan—of sweat in Gethsemane—of blood and fire, and vapour of smoke, and flaming wrath on Calvary, baptize, Oh baptize my soul, and make as full an end of the original sin which I have from Adam, as thy last baptism made of the likeness of sinful flesh which thou hadst from a daughter of Eve. Some of thy people look at death for full salvation from sin; but, at thy command, Lord, I look unto thee. Say to my soul, I am thy salvation: and let me feel in my heart, as well as see with my understanding that thou canst save from sin to the uttermost, all that come to God through thee. I am tired of forms, professions, and orthodox notions; so far as they are not pipes or channels to convey life, light, and love to my dead, dark, and stony heart. Neither the plain letter of thy gospel, nor the sweet fore-tastes and transient illuminations of thy Spirit, can satisfy the large desires of my faith. Give me thine abiding Spirit, that he may continually shed abroad thy love in my soul. Come, O Lord, with that blessed Spirit:—Come Thou, and thy Father, in that holy Comforter,—Come to make your abode with me; or I shall go wearily mourning to my grave.—Blessed mourning! Lord, increase it. I had rather wait in tears for thy fulness, than wantonly waste the fragments of thy spiritual bounties, or feed with Laodicean contentment upon the tainted manna of my former experiences. Righteous Father, I hunger and thirst after thy righteousness: send thy holy Spirit of promise to fill me therewith, to sanctify me throughout, and to seal me centrally to the day of eternal redemption, and finished salvation. Not for works of righteousness which I have done, but of thy mercy, for Christ's sake, save thou me by the complete washing of regeneration, and the full renewing of the Holy Ghost. And in order to this, pour out of thy Spirit: shed it abundantly on me, till the fountain

of

of living water abundantly spring up in my soul, and I can say, in the full sense of the words, that thou livest in me, that my life is hid with thee in God, and that my spirit is returned to him that gave it—to Thee, the First and the Last,—my Author and my End—my God and my all!"

SECTION XX.

An Address to perfect Christians.

YE have not sung the preceding hymns in vain, O ye men of God, who have mixed faith with your evangelical requests. The God, who says, "Open thy mouth wide and I will fill it:"—the gracious God who declares, "Blessed are they that hunger after righteousness, for they shall be filled:"—that faithful, covenant keeping God has now "filled you with all righteousness, peace, and joy in believing."—The brightness of Christ's appearing has destroyed the indwelling *man of sin*. He who had slain the *lion* and the *bear* [he who had already done so great things for you] has now crowned all his blessings by slaying the Goliath within. Aspiring, unbelieving *self* is fallen before the victorious Son of David. The quick and powerful word of God, which is sharper than any two-edged sword, has pierced even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit. The carnal mind is cut off: the circumcision of the heart through the Spirit, has fully taken place in your breasts: and now, that mind is in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: ye are spiritually-minded: loving God with all your heart, and your neighbour as yourselves, ye are full of goodness, ye keep the commandments, ye observe the law of liberty, ye fulfil the law.

law of Christ. Of him ye have learned to be meek and lowly in heart. Ye have fully taken his yoke upon you; in so doing ye have found a sweet, abiding rest unto your souls; and from blessed experience ye can say, "Christ's yoke is easy, and his burden his light:—His ways are ways of pleasantness; and all his paths are peace:—All the paths of the Lord are mercy and truth, unto such as keep his covenant, and his testimonies." The beatitudes are sensibly yours: and the charity described by St. Paul, has the same place in your breasts, which the tables of the law had in the ark of the covenant. Ye are the living temples of the Trinity: the Father is your life; the Son your light; the Spirit your love: ye are truly baptized into the mystery of God, ye continue to drink into one spirit, and thus ye enjoy the grace of both sacraments. There is an end of your *Lo here!* and *Lo there!* The kingdom of God is now established within you. Christ's righteousness, peace, and joy are rooted in your breasts by the Holy Ghost given unto you, as an abiding guide and indwelling Comforter. Your introverted eye of faith looks at God, who gently guides you with his eye into all the truth necessary to make you do justice, love mercy, and walk humbly with your God. Simplicity of intention keeps darkness out of your mind, and purity of affection keeps wrong fires out of your breast. By the former ye are without guile: by the latter ye are without envy. Your passive will instantly melts into the will of God; and on all occasions you meekly say, *Not my will, O Father, but thine be done:* thus are ye always ready to suffer what you are called to suffer. Your active will evermore says, *Speak, Lord: thy servant heareth: what wouldest thou have me to do?* It is my meat and drink to do the will of my heavenly Father: thus are ye always ready to do whatsoever ye are convinced that God calls you to do; and whatsoever ye do, whether ye eat, or drink, or do any thing else, ye do all

to the glory of God, and in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ; rejoicing evermore; praying without ceasing; in every thing giving thanks; solemnly looking for, and hastening unto the hour of your dissolution, and the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and your soul being clothed with a celestial body, shall be able to do celestial services to the God of your life.

In this blessed state of christian perfection, the holy anointing, which ye have received of him, abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you, unless it be as the same anointing teacheth. Agreeably therefore, to that anointing, which teaches by a variety of means, which formerly taught a prophet by an ass, and daily instructs God's children by the ant, I shall venture to set before you some important directions, which the Holy Ghost has already suggested to your pure minds: for I would not be negligent to put you in remembrance of these things, though ye know them, and be established in the present truth. Yea, I think it meet to stir you up, by putting you in remembrance, and giving you some hints, which it is safe for you frequently to meditate upon.

I. Adam, ye know, lost his human perfection in paradise: Satan lost his angelic perfection in heaven; the devil thrusted sore at Christ in the wilderness, to throw him down from his mediatorial perfection: and St. Paul, in the same Epistles where he professes not only christian, but apostolic perfection also [Phil. iii. 15. 1 Cor. ii. 6. 2 Cor. xiii. 11.] informs us, that he continued to run for the crown of heavenly perfection like a man, who might not only lose his crown of christian perfection, but become a reprobate, and be cast away, 1 Cor. ix. 25, 27. And therefore so run ye also, that no man take your crown of christian perfection in this world, and that ye may obtain your crown of angelic perfection in the world to come. Still keep

keep your body under. Still guard your senses. Still watch your own heart; and, stedfast in the faith, still resist the devil, that he may flee from you; remembering that if Christ himself [as Son of man] had conferred with flesh and blood, refused to deny himself, and avoided taking up his cross; he had lost his perfection, and sealed up our original apostacy.

"We do not find," [says Mr. Wesley, in his *Plain Account of Christian Perfection*] "any general state described in scripture, from which a man cannot draw back to sin. If there were any state wherein this was impossible, it would be that of those who are sanctified, who are Fathers in Christ, who rejoice evermore, pray without ceasing, and in every thing give thanks. But it is not impossible for thale to draw back. They who are sanctified, may yet fall and perish, Heb. x. 29. Even Fathers in Christ, need that warning, *Love not the world*, 1 John ii. 15. They who rejoice, pray, and give thanks without ceasing, may nevertheless quench the Spirit, 1 Thess. v. 16, &c. Nay, even they who are sealed unto the day of redemption, may yet grieve the Holy Spirit of God, Eph. v. 30."*

The doctrine of the absolute perseverance of the saints, is the first card which the devil played against man: "Ye shall not surely die, if ye break the law of your perfection." This fatal card won the game. Mankind and paradise were lost. The

* We do not hereby deny, that some believers have a testimony in their own breast, that they shall not finally fall from God. "They may have it" [says Mr. Wesley in the same Tract] "and this persuasion, that neither life nor death shall separate them from God, far from being hurtful, may in some circumstances be extremely useful." But wherever this testimony is divine, it is attended with that grace which inseparably connects holiness and good works [the means] with perseverance and eternal salvation [the end:] and, in this respect, our doctrine widely differs from that of the Calvinists, who break the necessary connexion between holiness and infallible salvation, by making room for the foulest falls;—for adultery, murder, and incest.

artful serpent had too well succeeded at his first game, to forget that lucky card at his second. See him transforming himself into an angel of light on the pinnacle of the temple. There he plays over again his old game against the Son of God. Out of the Bible he pulls the very card, which won our first parents, and swept the stake—paradise—yea, swept it with the besom of destruction. *Cast thyself down* says he, *for it is written*, that all things shall work together for thy good, thy very falls not excepted; *He shall give his angels charge concerning thee, and in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone:* the tempter [thanks be to Christ] lost the game at that time; but he did not lose his card: and it is probable that he will play it round against you all; only with some variation. Let me mention one among a thousand. He promised our Lord that God's angels should bear him up in their hands, if he threw himself down: and it is not unlikely that he will promise you greater things still. Nor should I wonder if he was bold enough to hint, that, when you cast yourselves down, God himself shall bear you up in his hands, yea in his arms of everlasting love. O ye men of God, learn wisdom by the fall of Adam. O ye anointed sons of the Most High, learn watchfulness by the conduct of Christ. If he was afraid to tempt the Lord his God, will ye dare to do it? If he rejected as poison, the hook of the absolute perseverance of the saints, though it was baited with scripture, will ye swallow it down, as if it were honey out of the rock of ages?—No: through faith in Christ, the scriptures have made you wise unto salvation: you will not only fly with all speed from evil, but from the very appearance of evil: and when you stand on the brink of a temptation, far from entering into it, under any pretence whatever, ye will leap back into the bosom of him who says, *Watch and pray, lest ye enter into temptation;* for though the spirit is willing, the flesh is weak. I grant that [evangelically-speaking].

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ing] the weakness of the flesh is not sin ; but yet the deceitfulness of sin creeps in at this door ; and by this means not a few of God's children, after they had escaped the pollutions of the world, through the sanctifying knowledge of Christ, under plausible pretences, have been again entangled therein and overcome. Let their falls make you cautious. Ye have put on the whole armour of God : O keep it on, and use it with all prayer, that ye may, to the last, stand complete in Christ, and be more than conquerors tho' him that has loved you.

II. Remember that *Every one who is perfect, shall be as his Master.* Now if your *Master* was tempted and assaulted to the last ;—if, to the last he watched and prayed ; using all the means of grace himself, and enforcing the use of them upon others ;—if to the last he fought against the world, the flesh, and the devil, and did not put off the harness till he had put off the body : think not yourselves above him ; but *Go and do likewise.* If he did not regain paradise, without going through the most complete renunciation of all the good things of this world, and without meekly submitting to the severe stroke of his last enemy, *death* ; be content to be *perfect as he was* ; nor fancy that your flesh and blood can inherit the celestial kingdom of God, when the flesh and blood which *Emmanuel* himself assumed from a pure virgin, could not inherit it without passing under the cherub's flaming sword : I mean, without going through the gates of death.

III. Ye are not complete in wisdom. Perfect love does not imply perfect knowledge : but perfect humility, and perfect readiness to receive instruction. Remember therefore, that if ever ye shew, that ye are above being instructed, even by a fisherman who teaches according to the divine anointing, ye will shew that ye are fallen from a perfection of humility, into a perfection of pride.

IV. Do

IV. Do not confound *angelical*, with *christian* perfection. *Uninterrupted transports of praise, and ceaseless raptures of joy, do not belong to christian, but to angelical perfection.* Our feeble frame can bear but a few drops of that glorious cup. In general, that *new wine* is too strong for our *old bottles*; that power is too excellent for our *earthen, cracked vessels*; but, weak as they are, they can bear a fulness of *meekness, of resignation, of humility, and of that love, which is willing to obey unto death.* If God indulges you with extasies, and extraordinary revelations; be thankful for them; but be not *exalted above measure by them*; take care lest enthusiastic delusions mix themselves with them; and remember, that your *christian* perfection does not so much consist in *building a tabernacle upon mount Tabor, to rest and enjoy rare sights there; as in resolutely taking up the cross, and following Christ to the palace of a proud Caiaphas, to the judgment-hall of an unjust Pilate, and to the top of an ignominious Calvary.* Ye never read in your Bibles, "Let that glory be upon you, which was also upon St. Stephen, when he looked up steadfastly into heaven, and said, Behold I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God." But ye have frequently read there, Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus, who made himself of no reputation, took upon him the form of a servant, and being found in fashion as a man, humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.

See him on that ignominious gibbet: he hangs—abandoned by his friends—surrounded by his foes—condemned by the rich—insulted by the poor.—He hangs;—a worm and no man—a very scorn of men, and the out-cast of the people.—All that see him, laugh him to scorn. They shoot out their lips, and shake their heads, saying, He trusted in God, that he would deliver him; let him deliver him, if he will have him.—There is none to

help him:—one of his Apostles denies, another sells him; and the rest run away. Many oxen are come about him:—fat bulls of Basan close him on every side—they gape upon him with their mouths, as it were a ramping lion:—he is poured out like water—his heart in the midst of his body is like melting wax:—his strength is dried up like a pot-sherd:—his tongue cleaveth to his gums:—he is going into the dust of death:—many dogs are come about him:—and the counsel of the wicked layeth siege against him:—his hands and feet are pierced:—you may tell all his bones:—they stand staring and looking upon him:—they part his garments among them, and cast lots for the only remains of his property, his plain, seamles vesture. Both suns, the visible and the invisible, seem eclipsed. No cheering beam of created light gilds his gloomy prospect. No smile of his heavenly Father supports his agonizing soul. No cordial [unless it be vinegar and gall] revives his sinking spirits. He has nothing left, except his God. But his God is enough for him. In his God he has all things. And though his soul is seized with sorrow, even unto death; yet it hangs more firmly upon his God by a naked faith, than his lacerated body does on the cross by the clinched nails.—The perfection of his love shines in all its christian glory. He not only forgives his insulting foes and bloody persecutors; but in the highest point of his passion he forgets his own wants, and thirsts after their eternal happiness. Together with his blood, he pours out his soul for them; and excusing them all he says, *Father forgive them, for they know not what they do.* O ye adult sons of God, in this glass behold all with open face the glory of your Redeemer's forgiving, praying love; and, as ye behold it, be changed into the same image from glory to glory, by the loving Spirit of the Lord.

V. This lesson is deep: but he may teach you one deeper still. By a strong sympathy with him in

in all his sufferings, he may call you to know him every way crucified. Stern Justice thunders from heaven, *Awake, O sword, against the man who is my fellow!* The sword awakes—the sword goes thro' his soul—the flaming sword is quenched in his blood. But is one sinew of his perfect faith cut, one fibre of his perfect resignation injured, by the astonishing blow? No: his God slays him, and yet he trusts in his God. By the noblest of all ventures, in the most dreadful of all storms, he meekly bows his head, and shelters his departing soul in the bosom of his God.—“*My God! My God!* says he, though all my comforts have forsaken me, and all thy storms and waves go over me, yet into thy hands I commend my spirit.—For thou wilt not leave my soul in hell; neither wilt thou suffer thy holy One to see corruption. Thou wilt shew me the path of life, in thy presence is fulness of joy, and at thy right hand [where I shall soon sit] there are pleasures for evermore.”—What a pattern of perfect confidence! O ye perfect christians, be ambitious to ascend to those amazing heights of Christ’s perfection: *For even hereunto were ye called; because Christ also suffered for us: leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps: who knew no sin, who when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered he threatened not, but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously.* If this is your high calling on earth, rest not. O ye Fathers in Christ, till your patient hope, and perfect confidence in God, have got their last victory over your last enemy—the king of terrors.

“The ground of a thousand mistakes [says Mr. Wesley] is, the not considering deeply, that love is the highest gift of God, humble, gentle, patient love: that all visions, revelations, manifestations whatever, are little things compared to love.—It were well you should be thoroughly sensible of this: the heaven of heavens is love. There is nothing higher in religion: there is, in effect, nothing else.

If you look for any thing but *more love*, you are looking wide of the mark, you are getting out of the royal way. And when you are asking others, Have you received this or that blessing? If you mean any thing but *more love*, you mean wrong: you are leading them out of the way, and putting them upon a false scent. Settle it then in your heart, that from the moment God has saved you from all sin, you are to aim at nothing, but *more of that love described in the thirteenth of the Corinthians*. You can go no higher than this, tili you are carried into Abraham's bosom."

VI. Love is humble. "Be therefore clothed with humility," says Mr. Wesley: "Let it not only fill, but cover you all over. Let modesty and self-diffidence appear in all your words and actions. Let all you speak and do, shew that you are little, and base, and mean, and vile in your own eyes. As one instance of this, be always ready to own any fault you have been in. If you have at any time thought, spoke, or acted wrong, be not backward to acknowledge it. Never dream that this will hurt the cause of God: no, it will further it. Be therefore open and frank, when you are taxed with any thing: let it appear just as it is: and you will thereby not hinder, but adorn the gospel."—Why should ye be more backward in acknowledging your failings than in confessing that ye do not pretend to infallibility. St. Paul was perfect in the love which casts out fear, and therefore he boldly reproved the high-priest: but, when he had reproved him more sharply than the fifth commandment allows, he directly confessed his mistake, and set his seal to the importance of the duty, in which he had been inadvertently wanting. Then Paul said, "I knew not, brethren, that he was the high-priest: for it is written, Thou shalt not speak evil of the ruler of thy people." St. John was perfect in the courteous, humble love, which brings us down

down at the feet of all. His courtesy, his humility, and the dazzling glory, which beamed forth from a divine messenger [whom he apprehended to be more than a creature] betrayed him into a fault contrary to that of St. Paul; but far from concealing it, he openly confessed it, and published his confession for the edification of all the churches. *When I had heard and seen [says he] I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel who shewed me these things.* Then faith he unto me, *See thou do it not, for I am thy fellow-servant.* Christian perfection shines as much in the childlike simplicity, with which the perfect readily acknowledge their faults; as it does in the manly steadiness, with which they *resist unto blood, striving against sin.*

VII. If humble love makes us frankly confess our faults, much more does it incline us to own ourselves sinners—miserable sinners before that God, whom we have so frequently offended. I need not remind you, that your bodies are dead because of sin. You see, you feel it, and therefore, so long as you dwell in a prison of flesh and blood, which death [the avenger of sin] is to pull down; —so long as your final justification [as pardoned and sanctified sinners] has not taken place:—Yea, so long as you break the law of paradisiacal perfection, under which you were originally placed, it is meet, right, and your bounden duty to consider yourselves as sinners, who, [as transgressors of the law of innocence and the law of liberty] are guilty of death—of eternal death. St. Paul did so after he was come to mount Sion, and to the spirits of just men made perfect. He still looked upon himself as the chief of sinners, because he had been a daring blasphemer of Christ, and a fierce persecutor of his people. *Christ, says he, came to save sinners, of whom I am chief.* The reason is plain. Matter of fact is, and will be matter of fact to all eternity. According to the doctrines of grace and justice, and

before the throne of God's mercy and holiness, a sinner pardoned and sanctified must, in the very nature of things be considered as a sinner, for if you consider him as a saint, absolutely abstracted from the character of a sinner, how can he be a pardoned and sanctified sinner? To all eternity therefore, but much more while *death [the wages of sin]* is at your heels, and while ye are going to appear before the judgment-seat of Christ, to receive your final sentence of absolution or condemnation; it will become you to say with St. Paul, *We have all sinned and come short of the glory of God's being justified through the redemption that is in Jesus Christ—although we are justified judicially, as believers, through faith;—as obedient believers, through the obedience of faith; and as perfect christians, through christian perfection.*

VIII. Humble love becomes all things [but sin] to all men, although it delights most in those who are most holy. Ye may, and ought to set your love of peculiar complacence upon God's dearest children—upon those who, like yourselves, excel in virtue; because they more strongly reflect the image of the God of love, the Holy One of Israel. But, if ye despise the weak, and are above lending them an helping hand; ye are fallen from christian perfection, which teaches us to bear one another's burdens, especially the burdens of the weak. Imitate then the tenderness and wisdom of the good Shepherd, who carries the lamb in his bosom, gently leads the sheep which are big with young, feeds with milk those who cannot bear strong meat, and says to his imperfect disciples, *I have many things to say to you, but ye cannot bear them now.*

IX. Where the loving Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. Keep therefore at the utmost distance from the shackles of a narrow, prejudiced, bigoted spirit. The moment ye confine your love to the people

people who think just as you do, and your regard to the Preachers who exactly suit your taste, you fall from perfection and turn bigots. "I intreat you, [says Mr. Wesley, in his *Plain Account*] beware of bigotry. Let not your love, or beneficence, be confined to *Methodists* (so called) only: much less to that very small part of them, who seem to be renewed in love: or to those who believe your's and their report. O make not this your *Shibboleth*."—On the contrary, as ye have time and ability, *do good to all men*. Let your benevolence shine upon all: let your charity send its cherishing beams towards all, in proper degrees. So shall ye be perfect as your heavenly Father, who makes his sun to shine upon all; although he sends the brightest and warmest beams of his favour upon the household of faith, and reserves his richest bounties for those, who lay out their five talents to the best advantage.

X. Love, pure love, is satisfied with the *supreme Good*—with God. "Beware then of desiring any thing but him. Now you desire nothing else. Every other desire is driven out: see that none enter in again. Keep thyself pure: let your eye remain single, and your whole body shall remain full of light. Admit no desire of pleasing food, or any other pleasure of sense; no desire of pleasing the eye or the imagination; no desire of money, of praise, or esteem; of happiness in any creature. You may bring these desires back; but you need not; you may feel them no more. O stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made you free. Be patterns to all of denying yourselves, and taking up your cross daily. Let them see that you make no account of any pleasure, which does not bring you nearer to God; nor regard any pain which does: that you simply aim at pleasing him, whether by *doing* or *suffering*: that the constant language of your heart, with regard to pleasure

pleasure or pain, honour or dishonour, riches or poverty, is,

“ All’s alike to me, so I
In my Lord may live and die ! ”

XI. The best soldiers are sent upon the most difficult and dangerous expeditions: and as you are the best soldiers of Jesus Christ, ye will probably be called to drink deepest of his cup, and to carry the heaviest burdens. “ Expect contradiction and opposition” [says the judicious divine, whom I have just quoted] “ together with crosses of various kinds. Consider the words of St. Paul, *To you it is given in the behalf of Christ, for his sake, as a fruit of his death and intercession for you, not only to believe, but also to suffer for his sake, Phil. i. 23.* It is given ! God gives you this opposition or reproach : it is a fresh token of his love. And will you disown the giver ? Or spurn his gift, and count it a misfortune ? Will you not rather say, “ Father, the hour is come, that thou shouldest be glorified, Know thou givest thy child to suffer something for thee. Do with me according to thy will.” — “ Now that these things, far from being *hindrances* to the work of God, or to your soul, unless by your own fault, are not only unavoidable in the course of providence, but profitable, yea necessary for you. Therefore receive them from God (not from chance) with willingness, and thankfulness. Receive them from men with humility, meekness, yieldingness, gentleness, sweetness.”

Love can never do, nor suffer too much for its divine object. Be then ambitious, like St. Paul, to be made perfect in *sufferings*. I have already observed that the apostle, not satisfied to be a perfect christian, would also be a perfect martyr; earnestly desiring to know the fellowship of Christ’s [utmost] *sufferings*. Follow him, as he followed his suffering, crucified Lord. Your feet are shod with

the

the preparation of the gospel of peace, run after them both in the race of obedience, for the crown of martyrdom, if that crown is reserved for you. And if ye miss the crown of those who are martyrs in deed, ye shall however receive the reward of those who are martyrs in intention—the crown of righteousness and angelical perfection.

XII. But do not so desire to follow Christ to the garden of *Gethsemane*, as to refuse following him now to the carpenter's shop, if providence now calls you to it. Do not lose the present day by idly looking back at *yesterday*, or foolishly antedating the cares of *to-morrow*: but wisely use every hour; spending them as one who stands on the verge of time—on the border of eternity, and who has his work cut out by a wise providence from moment to moment. Never therefore neglect using the two talents you have *now*, and doing the duty which is now incumbent upon you. Should ye be tempted to it, under the plausible pretence of waiting for a greater number of talents; remember that God doubles our talents in the way of duty, and that it is a maxim advanced by *Elisha Coles* himself, *use grace and have [more] grace*. Therefore, "to continual watchfulness and prayer, add continual employment," says Mr. *Wesley*, for grace flies a vacuum as well as nature: the devil fills whatever God does not fill."—"As by works faith is made perfect, so the completing or destroying of the work of faith, and enjoying the favour, or suffering the displeasure of God, greatly depends on every single act of obedience."—If you forget this, you will hardly do now whatsoever your hand findeth to do. Much less will you do it with *all* your might—for God—for eternity.

XIII. Love is modest: it rather inclines to bashfulness and silence, than to talkative forwardness. *In a multitude of words there wanteth not sin*: be therefore slow to speak; nor cast your pearls before those who

who cannot distinguish them from pebbles. Nevertheless, when you are solemnly called upon, to bear testimony to the truth, and to say what great things God has done for you; it would be cowardice, or false prudence, not to do it with humility. Be then always ready to give an answer to every man who [properly] asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you, with meekness [without fluttering anxiety] and with fear [with a reverential awe of God upon your minds] 1 Pet. iii. 15. The perfect are burning and shining lights, and our Lord intimates, that, as a candle is not lighted to be put under a bushel, but upon a candlestick, that it may give light to all the house: so God does not light the candle of perfect love to hide it in a corner, but to give light to all those who are within the reach of its brightness. If diamonds glitter, if stars shine, if flowers display their colours, and perfumes diffuse their fragrance, to the honour of the Father of lights, and Author of every good gift: if, without self-seeking, they disclose his glory to the utmost of their power, why should ye not go, and do likewise?—Gold answers its most valuable end when it is brought to light, and made to circulate for charitable and pious uses; and not when it lies concealed in a miser's strong box, or in the dark bosom of a mine. But when you lay out your spiritual gold for proper uses, beware of imitating the vanity of those coxcombs, who, as often as they are about to pay for a trifle, pull out a handful of gold, merely to make a shew of their wealth.

XIV. Love, or Charity, rejoiceth in the [display of an edifying] truth. Fact is fact all the world over. If you can say to the glory of God, that you are alive, and feel very well, when you do so; why could you not also testify to his honour, that you live not, but that Christ liveth in you; if you really find that this is your experience? Did not St. John say, Our love is made perfect—because as he

he is, so are we in this world ! Did not St. Paul write, The righteousness of the law is fulfilled in us, who walk after the Spirit ? Did he not with the same simplicity aver, that although he had nothing, and was sorrowful, yet he possessed all things, and was always rejoicing ?

Hence it appears, that, with respect to the declaring or concealing what God has done for your soul, the line of your duty runs exactly between the *proud forwardness* of some stiff pharisees, and the *voluntary humility* of some stiff mystics. The former vainly boast of more than they experience; and, by that means, they set up the cursed idol, *self*: the latter ungratefully hide the wonderful works of God, which the primitive christians spoke of publicly in a variety of languages; and, by this means they refuse to exalt their gracious Benefactor, *Christ*. The first error is undoubtedly more odious than the second; but, what need is there of leaning to either? Would ye avoid them both? Let your tempers and lives *always* declare, that perfect love is attainable in this life. And when you have a proper call to declare it with your lips and pens, do it without forwardness, to the glory of God; do it with simplicity, for the edification of your neighbour; do it with godly jealousy, lest ye should shew the treasures of divine grace in your hearts, with the same *self-complacence*, with which King Hezekiah shewed his treasures, and the golden vessels of the temple to the ambassadors of the King of Babylon, remembering what a dreadful curse this piece of vanity pulled down upon him: *and Isaiah said unto Hezekiah, Hear the word of the Lord. Behold, the days come, that all that is in thine house shall be carried into Babylon: nothing shall be left, saith the Lord.* If God so severely punished Hezekiah's pride, how properly does St. Peter charge believers to give with fear an account of the grace which is in them! and how careful should ye be to observe this important charge!

XV. If you will keep at the utmost distance from the vanity which proved so fatal to good King *Hezekiah*, follow an excellent direction of Mr. *Wesley*. When you have done any thing for God, or received any favour from him, retire, if not into your closet, into your heart, and say, "I come, Lord, to restore to thee what thou hast given, and I freely relinquish it, to enter again into my own nothingness. For what is the most perfect creature in heaven or earth in thy presence, but a void, capable of being filled with thee and by thee, as the air which is void and dark, is capable of being filled with the light of the sun? Grant therefore, O Lord, that I may never appropriate thy grace to myself, any more than the air appropriates to itself the light of the sun, who withdraws it every day to restore it the next; there being nothing in the air, that either appropriates his light or resists it. O give me the same facility of receiving and restoring thy grace and good works! I say, thine: for I acknowledge that the root from which they spring, is in thee and not in me." — The true means to be filled anew with the riches of grace, is thus to strip ourselves of it: without this it is extremely difficult not to faint in the practice of good works. — " And therefore, that your good works may receive their last perfection, let them lose themselves in God. This is a kind of death to them, resembling that of our bodies, which will not attain their highest life, their immortality, till they lose themselves in the glory of our souls, or rather of God wherewith they shall be filled. And it is only what they had of earthly and mortal, which good works lose by this spiritual death."

XVI. Would ye see this deep precept put in practice? Consider St. Paul. Already possessed of christian perfection, he does good works from morning till night: he warns every one night and day with tears. He carries the gospel from East to West.

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West. Wherever he stops, he plants a church at the hazard of his life. But instead of resting in his present perfection, and in the good works which spring from it, he grows in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ; unweariedly following after, if that he may apprehend that [perfection] for which also he is apprehended of Christ Jesus,—that celestial perfection, of which he got lively ideas, when he was caught up to the third heaven, and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter. With what amazing ardor does he run his race of christian perfection for the prize of that higher perfection! How does he forget the works of yesterday, when he lays himself out for God to day! Though dead, he yet speaketh, nor can an address to perfect christians be closed by a more proper speech than his. Brethren, says he, Be followers of me—I count not myself to have apprehended [my angelical perfection:] but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind (settling in none of my former experiences, resting in none of my good works) and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press towards the mark, for the [celestial] prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. Let us therefore, as many as are perfect, be thus minded: and if in any thing ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you. In the mean time you may sing the following hymn of the Rev. Mr. Charles Wesley, which is descriptive of the destruction of corrupt self-will, and expressive of the absolute resignation which characterises a perfect believer.

To do, or not to do; to have,
Or not to have, I leave to Thee:
To be, or not to be I leave:
Thy only will be done in me:
All my requests are lost in one,
Father, thy only will be done.

Suffice that, for the season past,
 Myself in things divine I sought,
 For comforts cried with eager haste,
 And murmuréd that I found them not :
 I leave it now to thee alone,
 Father, thy only will be done.

Thy gifts I clamour for no more,
 Or selfishly thy grace require,
 An evil heart to varnish o'er ;
 Jesus the Giver I desire ;
 After the flesh no longer known :
 Father, thy only will be done.

Welcome alike the crown or cross ;
 Trouble I cannot ask, nor peace,
 Nor toil, nor rest, nor gain, nor loss,
 Nor joy, nor grief, nor pain, nor ease,
 Nor life, nor death : but ever groan,
 Father, thy only will be done.

This hymn suits all the believers who are at the bottom of mount Sion, and begin to join the spirits of just men made perfect. But when the triumphal chariot of perfect love gloriously carries you to the top of perfection's hill ;—when you are raised far above the common heights of the perfect—when you are almost translated into glory like Elijah, then you may sing another hymn of the same christian poet, with the Rev. Mr. Madan, and the numerous body of imperfectionists who use his collection of Psalms, &c.

Who in Jesus confide,
 They are bold to out-ride
 The storms of affliction beneath :
 With the prophet they soar
 To that heavenly shore,
 And out-fly all the arrows of death.

By

By faith we are come
 To our permanent home;
 By hope we the rapture improve:
 By love we still rise,
 And look down on the skies—
 For the heaven of heavens is love!

Who on earth can conceive
 How happy we live
 In the city of God the great King!
 What a concert of praise,
 When our Jesus's grace
 Whe whole heavenly company sing!

What a rapturous song,
 When the glorified throng
 In the spirit of harmony join!
 Join all the glad choirs,
 Hearts, voices, and lyres,
 And the burden is mercy divine!

But when you cannot follow Mr. Madan, and
 the imperfectionists of the Lock-chapel, to those
 rapturous heights of perfection, you need not give
 up your shield. You may still rank among the per-
 fect, if you can heartily join in this version of
 Psalm cxxxii.

Lord, thou dost the grace impart!
 Poor in spirit, meek in heart,
 I will as my Master be
 Rooted in humility.

Now, dear Lord, that thee I know,
 Nothing will I seek below,
 Aim at nothing great or high,
 Lowly both in heart and eye.

Simple,

Simple, teachable, and mild,
Awed into a little child,
Quiet now without my food,
Weaned from every creature good.

Hangs my new born soul on thee,
Kept from all idolatry;
Nothing wants beneath, above,
Resting in thy perfect love.

That your earthen vessels may be filled with this
love till they break, and you enjoy the divine ob-
ject of your faith without an interposing veil of
gross flesh and blood, is the wish of one who sin-
cerely praises God on your account, and ardently
prays,

" Make up thy jewels, Lord, and show
The glorious, spotless church below :
The fellowship of saints make known ;
And Oh ! my God, might I be one !

O might my lot be cast with these,
The least of Jefu's witnesses !
O that my Lord would count me meet
To wash his dear disciples feet !

To wait upon his saint's below !
On gospel-errands for them go !
Enjoy the grace to angels given !
And serve the royal heirs of heaven !"

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